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A NEW DEPARTMENT OF THE DICKENS FELLOWSHIP.

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SPECIAL NOTICE

In order to meet the repeated requests of Members of the Fellowship, the Council is gratified to be able to announce that a Costume Department has been established at The Dickens House.

The nucleus of the collection of costumes has been formed during the past year by Miss Minards, the Assistant Secretary, assisted by a willing band of helpers.

There is already available for hire a good assortment of ladies' costumes and also a few for gentlemen (as far as possible correct in detail according to Dickens's works) suitable for dramatic performances, pageants, costume dances and similar functions.

A list of present stock can be had upon application to Miss Minards who has undertaken the direction of the new department.

The stock of costumes is being supplemented and special attention will be given to the men's department at the earliest opportunity.

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Each Costume	... ...	3/6 per day, 5/- two days.
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Adapted by J. COOPER SANDS.

The following is a List of Sketches and Plays adapted from Dickens which can be obtained from The Dickens House. Sketches 6d. each, Plays 1/- each.

No. SKETCHES

1. The Gentleman next Door (Nicholas Nickleby) 3 Men and 2 Women
2. Gabriel Varden's Household. 1 Man and 3 Women.
3. Domestic Bliss in the Varden's Household. 2 Men and 2 Women.
4. Mark Tapley's Farewell and Return. 2 or 3 Men and 1 Woman.
5. The Stranger's Visit (Barnaby Rudge). 2 Men and 1 Woman.
6. David Copperfield arrives at Dover. 2 Men, 3 Women and 3 Boys.
7. Mrs. Jarley's Waxworks. 2 Men, 2 Women and 10 Living Figures.
8. The Flight of Em'ly. 3 Men and 2 Women.
9. A Night Adventure (Old Curiosity Shop). 7 Men and 3 Women.
10. The Death of Quilp. 4 Men and 2 Women.
11. Two Scenes from A Tale of Two Cities. (The Jackal and the Fellow of no Delicacy). 2 Men and 1 Woman.
12. Scenes from Edwin Drood (Rosa seeks her Guardian) (Mrs. Billickin of Bloomsbury Square). 2 Men and 3 Women.
13. David meets some old friends. 4 Men and 3 Women.

PLAYS

"THE BATTLE OF LIFE," "MARTIN CHUZZLEWIT,"
"THE OLD CURIOSITY SHOP," "DOMBEY AND SON."

SUMMER
VOL. XXIX. 1933 No. 227

Drawn by [*Ruth Whittaker*

Dickens for All. Dickens has been very much in the air of late, and there have been at least two sensations which have made the past quarter a memorable one. First and foremost, there has been the scheme for the provision of sets of Dickens's works for even those of the most modest means. Certainly this has been in the nature of an advertising "stunt," but it has had the remarkable effect of placing the complete works of Dickens in homes where they might otherwise have been missing. The originators of the scheme were the proprietors of the London "Daily Herald." With a view to increasing their circulation, they offered to their readers the complete works of Dickens with all the original illustrations, printed on good paper from new type, and strongly bound in cloth, at the ridiculously low price of eleven shillings for the sixteen volumes; it was only necessary to add to this a coupon cut from each daily issue over a period of four months. The offer was so overwhelmingly advantageous that the three other "popular" dailies, "The Daily Mail," "The Daily Express" and "The News Chronicle," who between them must have a circulation of about five millions daily, were forced as a matter of protection to adopt a similar plan to provide Dickens's works to their readers, and in less than a fortnight they had formulated a scheme which provided their own readers with a similar sixteen volumes for ten shillings only. This is not the place to discuss the ethics of the proceedings; we are content to see the press acknowledge the high place Dickens holds in the affection of the public, and to know that Dickens in the home is now within the reach of all; as Mr. Ivor Brown says in the "Manchester Guardian," "The new Dickens public will have many surprises, these film-fed people will rediscover a world

without vamps, a world in which young women are mere floral decorations; above all, they will enter a world in which "making good" and making money are not conceived as identical."

* * * * *

The Gateway to Dickens. I must compliment the proprietors of "The Daily Herald" for putting into effect the inspiration of Sir John Martin Harvey and giving their subscribers a "Surprise Gift" in the shape of a special edition of *A Christmas Carol* in large type and on thick paper, with excellent illustrations by Gilbert Wilkinson. They offer it as a gift book for a child, as the "first introduction to a library of limitless entertainment," in the hope that it will "open the door to the immortal magic of an author who more than any other touches the heart and thrills the soul of all who read him." Sir John himself contributes a foreword, expressing the hope that the book will be like the torch of old that was handed on, and "will carry the immortal message of Dickens down the highway of time."

* * * * *

The Real Dickens. The second sensation came simultaneously with the first. It consisted in the publication of one volume at the price of nine shillings of a work purporting to be "The Real David Copperfield," which if it had not proceeded from the pen of a man who had already earned some distinction in the world of letters, would have been destined to blush unseen. As it was it came in for as severe condemnation by the press as that which greeted "This Side Idolatry" a few years ago. Had it been a critical study of what is probably the most famous of all Dickens's works, it would undoubtedly have been welcomed, and added lustre to the name of Mr. Robert Graves. But instead of that, the author has attempted to rewrite the book as he thinks Dickens would have written it had he not been hampered by the system of monthly publication and "if he had paid more attention to his own critical conscience than to the susceptibilities of his public." The result is a very curious hotch-potch of Dickens and Graves with all the poetry of Dickens eliminated, and much modern thought and expression introduced. The press has severely trounced Mr. Graves for his outrage. We Dickensians are by no means annoyed. Criticism we would welcome; we have found much food for thought in his four-page introduction; but as for the rest of the book we smile to think that a man possessing the talents which on several sides are accorded to him, should waste them on such an unnecessary task.

* * * * *

Which is Your Choice? Here in parallel columns are a few extracts from the false and the real *David Copperfield*. Which is your choice?

The Real David Copperfield.	*David Copperfield.*
Oh, how ill I felt the next morning! My mouth, my throat,	But the agony of mind, the remorse, and shame I felt when I

my head, my stomach ! *Goroo, goroo, Oh* ! The smell of wine and cigar-smoke and my own vomit ! *Oh, goroo, goroo* !

became conscious next day . . . my racking head—the smell of smoke, the sight of glasses, the impossibility of going out or even getting up. Oh, what a day it was.

" Carefully, please Quinion. Somebody's sharp."

" Who's that ? " Mr. Quinion grinned.

" Only Brooks the cutler."

" Quinion," said Mr. Murdstone, " take care if you please, somebody's sharp."

" Who is ? " asked the gentleman laughing. . . .

" Only Brooks of Sheffield," said Mr. Murdstone.

The first boy I saw was Tradderly whom everybody called Traddles.

It was no other than Tommy Traddles who gave me this piece of information. He was the first boy who returned.

By now it was low water, and he went out with the tide.

And, it being low water, he went out with the tide.

I went, and it was Steerforth. He was lying with his head on his arm, as when I had seen him last.

But, he led me to the shore. And on that part of it where she and I had looked for shells, two children—on that part of it where some lighter fragments of the old boat, blown down last night, had been scattered by the wind—among the ruins of the home he had wronged—I saw him lying with his head upon his arm, as I had often seen him lie at school.

I screwed my head round to read the monumental tablets on the wall. One was about Mr. James Rodgers, late of this parish, who had departed this life some two years before. Affliction Sore, Long Time he Bore, Physicians were in Vain.

I look up at the monumental tablets on the wall, and try to think of Mr. Bodgers, late of this parish, and what the feelings of Mrs. Bodgers must have been, when affliction sore, long time Mr. Bodgers bore, and physicians were in vain.

Peggotty is darning and I am sitting near her at the table reading aloud about the habits of crocodiles—which I pronounce in four syllables, not knowing

Peggotty and I were sitting one night by the parlour fire alone. I had been reading to Peggotty about crocodiles. . . .

" Now let me hear some more

better. Peggotty knows no better either.

about the Crorkindills," said Peggotty, who was not quite right in the name yet.

Well, I leave it to you, young gentleman. But a waiter's life's a hard one. He lives on broken victuals and he sleeps rough.

If I had a good place and was treated well here, I should beg acceptance of a trifle, instead of taking it. But I live on broken wittles—and I sleep on the coals.

Dora found that she was to have a baby. I was overjoyed at the prospect of Dora as a mother. Having a child dependent on her would give her a sense of responsibility. . . . Dora tripped on the stair-carpet . . . and fell down a whole flight. So the baby was not born and the doctor told me that she had done herself serious internal injury.

But as that year wore on, Dora was not strong. I had hoped that lighter hands than mine would help to mould her character, and that a baby smile upon her breast might change my child-wife to a woman. It was not to be. The spirit fluttered for a moment on the threshold of its little prison and, unconscious of captivity, took wing.

* * * * *

Dickens Streets. In close proximity to Dorrit Street and Clennam Street in the famous Lant Street region of the Borough another street is to be named Doyce Street. A protest from the Dickens Fellowship, and others, has been raised against the proposed change in the name of Selwood Terrace, Kensington, where Dickens lived for a time prior to his marriage. At the time of writing we do not know if the protest has been effective or not ; but we believe it will be.

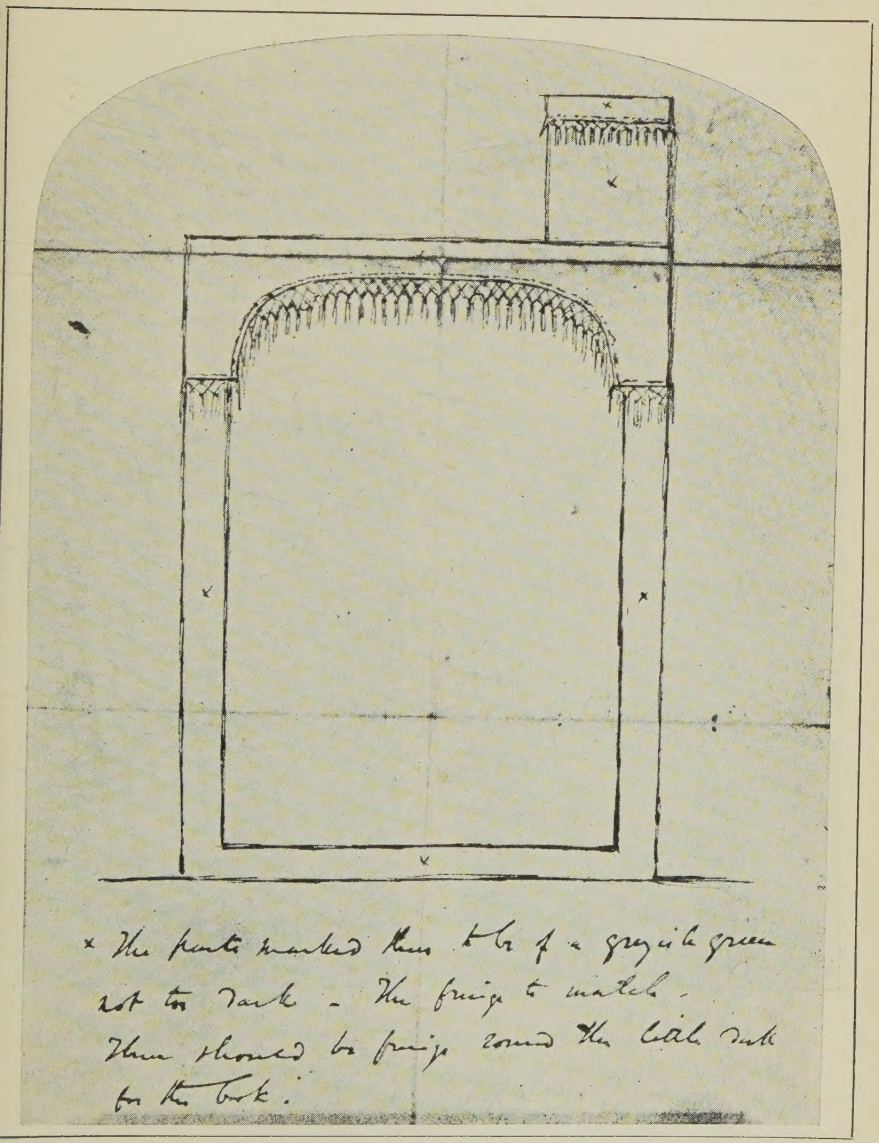
* * * * *

The Strange Gentleman. Mr. J. Hunt Stanford, the President of the Toronto Branch, sends me a correction to my note in the last issue. The St. Pancras Branch cannot claim to be the first to perform this play, for it appears that the Toronto Branch presented it in March, 1930, with very great success. I am sorry I overlooked this. They have also subsequently played both "Mr. Nightingale's Diary" and "The Lamplighter," and are contemplating a production of "The Village Coquettes," which is a noteworthy record.

* * * * *

Dickens's Reading Desk. Mr. Walter T. Spencer has lately presented to The Dickens House, Dickens's original sketch for the reading desk which accompanied him on his famous reading tours. This desk has been an object of great interest in the Library of the House ever since it was first opened to the public. A reproduction of the sketch is given on the opposite page ; it shows the great care Dickens always took over detail. The carpenter who was entrusted with the making of the desk, treasured

the design for many years after Dickens's death, and then it passed into the possession of George R. Sims. At the sale of Sims's effects


× The parts marked thus × to be of a greyish green
not too dark - The fringe to match.
There should be fringe round the table cloth
for the book.

Dickens's Original Design for his Reading Desk

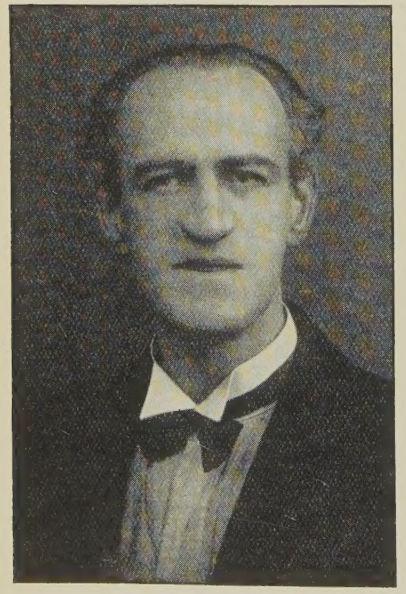
the drawing was purchased by Mr. Spencer, who refused many tempting offers for it, regarding it as a special memento of the author, preferring

to see it hang beside his own desk in his New Oxford Street office. It now occupies its rightful place by the side of the reading desk in The Dickens House.

* * * * *

Ephesian Again.

Mr. C. E. Bechofer Roberts is "at it again." In part 4 of "A Continental Diary," in the "New English Weekly" for April 20th, he writes, from Udine, "After dinner, go to 'The Adolescence of a Queen' at local theatre; Italian translation of Austrian play by Sil-Vana. Subject: youthful Queen Victoria being turned from frivolity to seriousness through conversation with Carlo Dickens, noted British author, who tells her that people are suffering because of her lack of interest in them. Consider this interesting historically, seeing that Dickens first met Queen when she was actually fifty and he fifty-eight, but, as any fable is good enough to bolster up Dickens legend, play ought to be produced in England; would undoubtedly be regarded by Dickens Fellowship as authentic."



Mr. J. Sherratt,
Hon. Sec. Blackpool Branch

Alderman John Potter, J.P., M.P.
Founder of the Blackpool Branch

Mr. Hugh Walpole will propose the toast of the Immortal Memory at the Conference Dinner at Blackpool on June 17th. Mr. Horace Annesley Vachell, the President, will reply to the toast of the Fellowship. The Chair will be occupied by the founder of the Blackpool Branch, Alderman John Potter, J.P., M.P.

Here's hoping to meet you there!

WALTER DEXTER.

THE PROTOTYPE OF "GASHFORD" IN *BARNABY RUDGE**

By W. FORBES GRAY, F.R.S.E.

IN the Scottish National Portrait Gallery there hangs a half-length portrait in oils, not perhaps of conspicuous merit artistically, but of abounding interest because of its subject. The likeness is that of an elderly, bald-headed man, wearing a black frock-coat of the late Georgian period. The neck is hidden by a deep collar, but the head presents finely chiselled features—high arched brow, sharp eyes, aquiline nose, while the countenance is expressive of strength of purpose and rare intelligence. The hand supports the chin, and the general demeanour is indicative of repose and consciousness of power. Yet there is something about the face which the skilled physiognomist would interpret as sinister. On the back of the picture is the following inscription: "Dr. Robert Watson, born at Elgin in Scotland: drawn from nature, at Rome, 1817, by V. Vogel."

This man, who views us from his niche in our National Portrait Gallery, had an extraordinary personality—so extraordinary that his career—meteoric, dazzling, notorious—perturbed the British Government, attracted the attention of Napoleon, and perplexed the Vatican. But he is specially interesting to the Dickens Fellowship because he is the prototype of Gashford in *Barnaby Rudge*.

Robert Watson died in November, 1838, at the Blue Anchor Tavern, close to London Bridge. The circumstances were tragic. Poor, lonely, and forgotten, he found life insupportable; and though his earthly pilgrimage was protracted far beyond the allotted span, numbering no fewer than ninety-two years, he put a period to it by strangling himself in bed. The night before his death he confided to his landlord that he had been secretary to Lord George Gordon in 1780.

Now there can be little doubt that when writing *Barnaby Rudge*, Dickens came to know of Watson's relations with Lord George Gordon, and of the theatrical part he played in the London riots of 1780. In the novel Dickens writes: "Ten or a dozen years ago—not more—a meagre, wan old man, diseased and miserably poor, was found dead in his bed at an obscure inn in the Borough, where he was quite unknown. He had taken poison. There was no clue to his name; but it was discovered from certain entries in a pocket book he carried, that he had been secretary to Lord George Gordon in the time of the famous riots."

In this passage Dickens has exercised his privilege as a novelist by altering the details to suit his purpose, but no one who reads this description along with the "Times" obituary of Watson can have any dubiety that the author of *Barnaby Rudge* has, in the character of Gashford, envisaged some of the traits of the Scottish adventurer, who is the subject of this lecture.

* Notes of a lecture (with some additions) delivered to the members of the Edinburgh branch of the Dickens Fellowship.

The Dickensian portrait is, on the whole, blacker than that of the original. The impudent, sycophantic, unscrupulous, hypocritical Gashford who flatters Lord George to the top of his bent is, happily, not an exact counterpart. Watson may have been the evil genius of the errant peer, but he was not quite on the same villainous level as Gashford. He did not act traitorously. On the contrary, he remained loyal to his hero, and visited him in Newgate. And so far from selling Lord George's secrets, he, long years after, as we shall see, betook himself to writing the biography of this fanatical peer.

But it is time to introduce the real secretary of the leader of the Gordon riots of 1780. When, on his death-bed, Robert Watson told the landlord of the Blue Anchor Tavern that he had been secretary to Lord George Gordon in 1780, he was disclosing but a fragment of a very extraordinary life-story. The career of the original of Gashford in *Barnaby Rudge* pulsates with interest and romance: it needs no embellishment. Merely to record the simple facts is to make the hearer conscious of a human record full of startling surprises, in which the adage that truth is stranger than fiction receives weighty enforcement.

Robert Watson was born at Elgin. The date of his birth is usually given as 29th June, 1746, less than three months after the overthrow of the Jacobite cause at Culloden, a circumstance worth noting in view of the fact that Watson was instrumental in recovering the Stuart Papers at Rome. Of his boyhood nothing is known, but as his father was a hirer in a Scottish town on the farther side of the Highland Line, it may be presumed that young Watson had a humble upbringing, and that his schooling was negligible.

Our first acquaintance with him begins, curiously enough, in the New World. He was still a young man when he went to try his fortune in America. Watson arrived in that country at a critical juncture, and there was no lack of opportunity for one possessed of his indomitable energy and enterprise. The upheaval among the North American States was beginning, and aggrieved colonists were meditating hostility to the high-handed methods of the British Government in proposing to tax them without representation at Westminster. It suited well with Watson's pugnacity that he should side with the malcontents. Accordingly, when the War of Independence broke out, he joined the colonial army, and took part in much of the fighting. In one engagement he sustained injuries that made him lame for life. Watson proved an excellent soldier, and was not only promoted to a colonelcy, but given some land, which he turned to commercial account. Still more important, he attracted the favourable notice of George Washington, and was admitted to his friendship.

A military career in America was followed by the study of medicine in his native Scotland. At which university Watson graduated cannot be stated with certainty, but there seems no reason to doubt that he received the degree of Doctor of Medicine, unless the description of himself as such on the title-page of one of his books, is false. Yet

the gaining of the degree cannot but be regarded as purposeless, for, whatever his intentions, there is no evidence that he ever practised. Besides qualifying as a medical practitioner, Watson appears to have laid the foundations of a general education; otherwise it is difficult to explain the mental culture he afterwards displayed in his intercourse with the great and fashionable in various countries.

Our next glimpse of Watson shows him being caught in the political whirlpool which was active in London in the days of Lord North. That statesman, the representative of reactionary government, was finding that nothing would atone for his blundering policy as regards America. Moreover, his troubles were increased by the fanaticism and eccentricities of Lord George Gordon, likewise by the menacing attitude of the London mob, of which the crazy peer was the ostensible leader. In or about 1780, Watson became acquainted with Lord George Gordon, and before long was acting as his secretary. It was a strange occupation for this resourceful, sagacious Scotsman, who, judging from the tenor of his life, must have been rather out of his element in fanning the flames of religious bigotry, and supporting the oddities of the idol of the London mob. Perhaps the most obvious explanation is that Watson was in desperate straits for a livelihood.

But the attachment may have had a modicum of sincerity, since some years after Lord George Gordon's death, Watson wrote his biography, as a token of gratitude for a "departed friend"; so at least he tells us.

Published in London in 1795, the work, extending to 137 octavo pages, professes to be "a philosophical review" of Lord George's political conduct, but is really a dextrous piece of whitewashing. The "No Popery" fanatic is represented as a maligned and long-suffering person, "the enemy of tyrants and the friend of the oppressed; a man of the strictest virtue, the greatest philanthropy, and the most unsullied honour." We seem to hear the resounding march of Gibbon's periods in the opening paragraph.

> "Lord George Gordon, whether we reflect on the eccentricity of his character, or on the vicissitudes of fortune which he experienced, was undoubtedly one of the most extraordinary persons of his age. But, as a celebrated writer has justly observed, the lives of few men deserve to be transmitted to posterity; and did not gratitude for a departed friend, added to a strong impulse to rescue injured virtue from the revengeful attacks of ministerial hirelings, urge me on, I should have submitted to the misfortune with calm resignation, and silently regretted his death with the patience of philosophy, as the common lot of human nature; such were my feelings for the loss of my departed friend."

Considering the tortuousness he habitually practised, the sentiments which Watson expresses, in dilating upon the virtues of his hero, are at any rate, interesting. The man who at all times preferred the line of least resistance proclaims the gospel of the straight course. "Though I am no apologist for religious sectaries, I can admire consistency." Were there not unimpugnable evidence to the contrary,

one might really be persuaded by statements of this sort that Watson did believe that honesty is the best policy. But if Watson's *obiter dicta* do not always ring true, he now and then was capable of saying wise things with a terseness that all can admire but few can emulate. Here are some :

> "When men think they sleep in peace, danger is often at hand."
>
> "To reign in security, a prince must reign in the affections of his people."
>
> "The blood of every martyr in defence of liberty produces fifty converts to the cause."
>
> "It is as impossible to make men loyal by imprisonment or pillory, as it is to change the revolution of the planetary system."

Unfortunately, Watson does not discuss his relations with Lord George Gordon and the riots of 1780, though he occasionally hints at his personal position. For example, in setting forth the motives which impelled his hero to become a Jew, he informs us that he must have talked with Lord George about the subject "a thousand times." Nor are we left without an inkling of where Watson stood in politics and religion. That he was an ardent Republican who regarded the nostrums of revolutionary France with feelings of veneration, is amply testified. Throughout the biography are fiery denunciations of monarchy, and, indeed, of all constituted authority. The authentic note of the demagogue and of the future president of the London Corresponding Society is heard in passages like the following : "Upon the immortal 14th of July, 1789, a day which gave new life to man, the pillars of superstition were shaken by the capture of the Bastille, and the thunderbolt of reason hurled despotism from its throne." What the Revolution did do was to bring about an orgy of bloodshed and riotous living, in which the dictates of ordinary morality had no force whatever.

Then as regards religion. Watson's standpoint was that of Robespierre, Diderot and the Encyclopaedists. He succumbed to the blandishments of the Age of Reason, and thought it would usher in the millennium. Yet Watson the apostle of Corybantic religion, could wax eloquent over so orthodox a body as the Quakers. "Oh ! peaceful and happy people, how excellent you shine in the opinion of all good men ! When I compare your actions with those of bloody sectaries, I am lost in admiration, and almost persuaded to be a Quaker." Again : "During my intercourse with the world, I have become acquainted with a great number of this persuasion (Quakers) . . . and I never knew one whom I could not recommend as an excellent Patriot and an honest man." It is refreshing to find so accomplished an adventurer recommending patriotism and saying a good word for honest men.

So uncompromising a Republican as Watson could not but fully surrender to the glamour of the French Revolution. While the Reign of Terror was distracting Europe, Watson was indefatigable in keeping "the sacred flame of liberty" aglow. Deep in the affairs of disaffected

Britons, he sought, by tongue and by pen, to produce a great wave of revolutionary fervour, which would sweep away the effete political system of our country. His chief associates in the work of sowing distrust were Thomas Hardy and John Horne Tooke, both of whom were charged with high treason, but acquitted. In 1792, Hardy founded the London Corresponding Society, which, in September of that year, sent a congratulatory address to the National Convention of France, and subsequently was in communication with "every Society in Great Britain which had been instituted for the purpose of obtaining by legal and constitutional means a Reform in the Commons' House of Parliament." This seems harmless enough, but some of the activities of the National Convention of France were, to say the least, suspicious, and those who regarded its objects as a menace to Britain were not altogether blameworthy.

Watson became president of the London Corresponding Society, and, like Hardy and Horne Tooke, had to run the gauntlet for his political opinions. In his edition of the political writings of Fletcher of Saltoun (1798), he mentions that the Bow Street authorities had, two years before, carried off his papers on a suspicion of treasonable correspondence with France, and that he suffered for two years and three months in Newgate upon a groundless charge of having intended to cause a rising against George III. Eventually he was tried at the Old Bailey but, as in the case of Hardy and Horne Tooke, was acquitted.

In October, 1798, Watson set foot in France, the country of his hopes if not of his adoption. He had already attained considerable notoriety, and on arrival in Nancy was announced in the "Moniteur" as "Lord Walson (*sic*) écossais libre." But Paris was his Mecca, and thither he proceeded without delay. In the French capital he gave unmistakable proof of his seditious tendencies by boldly issuing an address to the British people "advocating a general rebellion, and the reception of the French as deliverers." "Think of Ireland bleeding before you," he wrote to the Patriots of Scotland, "and be assured that the same fetters are being forged for you." Had Wallace died, had Buchanan and Fletcher written, had Ossian sung in vain? he asked. The name of their country could scarce be found on the map of Europe, but it was about to regain its ancient glory. Its deserted villages, its heather-clad mountains, would resound with joy, and Scotland would be free.

"Le citoyen Watson" was also the author of a memorial, dated July 19th, 1799, in which he describes himself as "President of the Executive Committee of the London Corresponding Society, Member of the British Union, and Representative of the Associations of Bath, Bristol, etc., to the Directory of the French Republic." In this document he first gives a highly coloured account of the numbers and importance of the United Scotsmen, and then goes on to say that the United Britons determined to send four delegates to the French Government, and that he was selected as one of the English representatives. These plans, however, were upset by the prompt action of the

authorities. Many arrests were made, but he himself escaped to France.

Shortly after Watson's arrival in Paris a curious turn of fortune brought him under the favourable notice of the most influential person in all France —Bonaparte. Happening to lodge with the First Consul's forest-keeper, the latter introduced him to his master. He became interested in the Scotsman who had aided his cause so dramatically. By and by the acquaintance became closer. Napoleon, anxious to master the English tongue, employed Watson to give him lessons. Gradually the teacher rose in the estimation of his pupil, who was instrumental in getting him made Principal of the reorganised Scots College in Paris. Watson held the office (which carried with it a salary of 3000 francs per annum) for six years. During this period he was a leading figure in the small colony of " Patriots " in Paris, comprising English, Scottish and Irish, who had been driven into exile by prosecution at home. On one occasion he presided at the St. Patrick's banquet to the Irish members of the colony.

In 1807 Watson quitted Paris for Rome. The circumstances attending his departure were novel. When the Berlin Decrees were issued, and Britain retaliated by declaring the whole coast of France to be in a state of blockade, Napoleon offered a prize of 100,000 francs to the most successful cultivator of cotton and indigo, the importation of these commodities into France being prevented by the British. Ambitious of winning the reward (for we may well suppose he was in dire straits for money), Watson proceeded to Rome, and diligently began to rear cotton and indigo in the Pontine marches. Unfortunately, the rainy season arrived before the crops were ripe, and the project was a failure.

Watson did not return to Paris but made his home in the city of the Caesars, where, for a few years, he moved in the first circles of Roman society. Indeed, his attractive personality, general culture, and quite uncommon experience of men and of the world, brought him numerous friends, and he became almost as well known on the banks of the Tiber as he was on the banks of the Seine. Whether Watson had some sense of what Frederic Harrison calls " that over-mastering human destiny which caused Byron to break forth—

' O Rome, my country, city of my soul ! ' "

we cannot tell. But we do know that, notwithstanding the influential people with whom he mixed, he was not well off. In fact, the need of money drove him to follow the Parisian precedent, and set up again as a teacher of English.

Needless to say, Watson did not secure another pupil of the standing of Napoleon, but he taught one or two foreigners who afterwards made some stir in the world. One of these was the German artist, Vogel von Vogelstein, who, besides painting the portrait of Watson already referred to, has left us a circumstantial account of his relations with the remarkable Scotsman. The pupil greatly admired the master—all except his vehement politics and his religion of negation.

Watson, he describes as "a little lame man of about sixty years" with a surprising knowledge of politics, history, geography, and, above all, English literature.

This German artist is also my authority for the statement that Watson, when living in London, had "hopes of becoming Secretary of the newly-appointed Lord Governor of India," by whom probably is meant Lord Cornwallis, who became Governor-General in 1786.

What appears to have been a central incident of the Roman period of Watson's career was his recovery of a huge mass of papers relating to the exiled Stuarts. In 1817 he chanced to make the acquaintance of an attorney, who had been confidential adviser to Cardinal Henry, Duke of York, the brother of Prince Charles Edward. At his death the Cardinal left in the custody of this lawyer a large and valuable collection of documents concerning the royal Stuarts and their successive efforts to regain the throne of their ancestors. In addition to many of the secret papers of the Old Pretender and his son, Prince Charles Edward, there were numerous letters of Louis XV and the Popes of that time, likewise a number of reports written by Jacobite spies at the various European courts--altogether a collection of surpassing importance and interest. Vogelstein tells us that he frequently went to peruse the Stuart Papers, which were kept "under the ceiling of an old Romish palazzo," in which the royal Cardinal's lawyer lived.

Watson soon became aware of this hoard, and when the lawyer wished to sell them, promptly struck a bargain, and got the whole of the documents for the paltry sum of £22 10s. It must have been a bulky purchase, for several carts were employed in conveying the Stuart Papers to a room which Watson, acutely conscious of their value, had fitted up for their reception. Lord Brougham, who was on a visit to Rome, is said to have offered Watson £1000 if he would publish certain letters in the collection but the latter preferred to sell the documents as a whole, and reap thereby an abundant harvest.

Watson's great expectations, however, were not fulfilled. Hardly had the Stuart Papers been consigned to their new home when they were seized at the instigation of Cardinal Gonsalvi, the secretary of Pope Pius VII. The documents were presented by the Papal authorities to the Prince Regent (afterwards George IV), and ultimately found a permanent home in Windsor Castle. How the Vatican came to seize the Stuart Papers is not clear, but in fairness it should be stated that Watson was offered repayment of the money he had disbursed. He was, however, naturally disgruntled, considering that had he been allowed to sell the collection on his own account, the hoard would have brought him a small fortune. As it was, the incident ended his residence in Rome. He left the ancient city loudly protesting that the Stuart Papers had been filched from him. Long after, he asserted that a commission was appointed to inquire into the matter; that during the investigation he received from the British Government £3100 as "alimentary subsistence"; and that he expected to obtain

a " sufficiency," which would have enabled him comfortably to pass the remainder of his days in his native land. But it is difficult to place reliance on these statements.

It is probable that on his departure from Rome, or soon after, Watson paid a visit to Greece. That he was in that country hardly admits of doubt, for he makes specific allusion to his visit in a letter to be quoted presently. No information, however, is available as to the object of his mission. Nor do we know how long he stayed in Greece. Ultimately, we again find him in Paris. There he seems to have lived in obscurity for some years. Happily, a most revealing letter has survived. Written from Paris on 3rd February, 1825, and addressed to a Mr. Macfarlane of Edinkillie, a friend of his early youth, it is also of considerable psychological interest. In reminding Macfarlane that much water has passed below the bridge since the day when they " parted on the banks of Lossie," Watson enlarges upon his astounding career :—

> " I have seen a great deal of the world, and have had many opportunities of associating freely with those who have played a conspicuous part in it. The smiling plains of Italy, and the still more enchanting valleys of Greece, have alternately been the object of my admiration ; but they have left an empty space in my mind, and nothing has ever yet supplied that generous friendship, that sympathetic feeling, which the recollection of our rambles at Urquhart and Boghead awakens in my breast."

After expressing the hope that the Government will award him a pension for rescuing the Stuart Papers, Watson continues : " Indeed, it is now time for me to cast anchor ; but I have not forgotten the words of a northern bard which you frequently applied to me :—

> ' Fortune and Bob, e'er since his birth,
> Could never yet agree ;
> And now he's kicked him from the earth,
> To try his fate at sea.' "

These sentimental outpourings might have been regarded as sincere were it not that they are coupled with a request for the loan of £100. Here is the explanation of Watson's plight :—

> " Upon my arrival from Greece a few days ago I expected to have found at Paris, a Mr. Smith, a gentleman from Glasgow, who has long been in the habit of acting as my banker, and of supplying me with such pecuniary assistance as I stood in need of. Unfortunately, he is now travelling in Russia, and I do not even know the province in which he has spent the winter. His absence has deranged my plans and put me to much inconvenience, as I have some *sacred engagements to fulfil*, and a highly valuable collection, which must be lost unless I command a certain sum of ready money. Thus situated, I have recourse to my dear Macfarlane, who never refused me anything, and who never shall be refused by me, and have to request you to send me one hundred pounds sterling. The opulent circumstances in which Providence has placed you, will,

I trust, enable you, without any material inconvenience, to oblige your preceptor and your friend. Your refusal, which I never can anticipate, would prove a death-blow to my feelings, and cause the loss of more than one hundred times the sum required."

Whether Macfarlane complied with the purport of this begging letter, and so enabled his old teacher to fulfil his "sacred engagements," has not transpired. But as regards Watson's "highly valuable collection," we learn from this epistle that it included "the original Chronicle of St. Denis, the Constantinople Bible, the Missal of Mary, Queen of Scots, the baton of Marshal Ney, the carriage of Bonaparte taken at the battle of Waterloo," together with "a variety of other articles, both curious and valuable."

When Watson wrote the letter to Macfarlane he was nearly eighty years of age. Yet he could tell his friend that he was in "excellent health." "When I neglect consulting my looking-glass, I am scarcely sensible of the approaches of age," he says.

But however that may be, Watson's dream of a tranquil eventide by the banks of Lossie was not to be realised. His foreign wanderings continued to almost the close of his career. When he returned to London in 1838 he had only a few months to live, and most of the time was spent between Bath and the Metropolis. Watson's last days were those of want and misery. Shortly before his death he took up his abode at the Blue Anchor Tavern, in Thames Street, London, where he had an apoplectic fit from which he never rallied. As I have already noted, he died by strangulation while temporarily insane.

In an obituary notice, which appeared in the "Gentleman's Magazine," for 1839, it is stated that Colonel Maceroni raised a portion of the funeral expenses, and that Lord Brougham, who, as stated, met Watson in Rome, subscribed two pounds. Colonel Maceroni also testified to the truth of Watson's statements to the tavern-keeper, referred to at the outset. Maceroni most likely became acquainted with Watson in Italy. At any rate he was aide-de-camp to Murat, King of Naples, as well as his biographer.

In conclusion, I would point out that while Watson was one in whom the moral sense had become atrophied, he must have been endowed with considerable ability, albeit he frequently put it to a wrong use. It is also demonstrably clear that the copiousness and richness of his experience of men and affairs—an experience gained in many countries and in circumstances widely diverse—was such as falls to the lot of few men in his station. Dr. Johnson said of Burke that a stranger could not be long in his company without exclaiming: "This is an extraordinary man!" And if the great Cham of Literature could have come across the adventurer from Elgin, and listened to his fascinating story, I think he might well have made the same remark about him. For Robert Watson, the secretary of Lord George Gordon, the English tutor of Napoloen, and a man of distinction in London, Paris and Rome, cannot but be acclaimed an extraordinary personage.

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WHO SAID ?

1. Do other men ; for they would do you. That's the true business precept. All others are counterfeit.
2. A splendid sample of our na-tive raw material, sir.
3. We start from The Mother's Arms, and we run to The Dust Shovel.
4. I don't believe there's no sich a person.
5. There is no such passion in human nature, as the passion for gravy among commercial gentlemen.
6. Every pleasure is transitory. We can't even eat long. If we indulge in harmless fluids, we get dropsy ; if in exciting liquids, we get drunk. What a soothing reflection is that !
7. What a blessed thing it is—living in a wale—to be contented.
8. A man can well afford to be as bold as brass, when he gets gold in exchange.
9. Floored for the present, but jolly.
10. My duty is to build, not speak ; to act, not talk ; to deal with marble, stone and brick, not language.
11. The Elements may have me when they please. I'm ready.
12. I don't like word of mouth, we never know who's listening.
13. I never see such a tight young dasher.
14. That which never ran smooth yet, can hardly be expected to change its character for us ; so we must take it as we find it, and fashion it into the very best shape we can, by patience and good-humour.
15. The wittles is up.
16. A prudent lad ! He never delivered himself up to the vanities of dress. No, no !
17. Europian. Quite Europian.
18. Say what you were going to say, and let my face be. As long as I can show my teeth when I want to, the colour of my lips is not material.
19. You have know'd me, now, ma'am, eight and thirty years : and did you ever know me go, or wish to go, when I was not welcome, say the words.
20. I'm the most literary man alive. I'm full of scholarship ; I'm full of genius ; I'm full of information ; I'm full of novel views on every subject ; yet look at my condition ! I'm at this moment obliged to two strangers for a tavern bill !
21. Hearts want binding, and spirits want balming when people die : not when people are born.
22. Nothing has an interest to me that's not a scent.
23. The peculiarity of my friend is, that he is always waiting round the corner.
24. Was there ever such a Roman as our friend ?
25. Caution is my weak point, and always was, from a boy.
26. Men of the world, my dear sir, men of the world.
27. You haven't half enough of the devil in you. Half enough ! You haven't any !
28. Regrets are the natural property of grey hairs.
29. All mildness and humility.

(*Answers, which will be found in "Martin Chuzzlewit," will be given in the next number.*)

ON WOMEN OLD AND NEW

By KATE PERUGINI

[In 1920 the late F. T. Dalton, the well-known critic of "The Times" delivered a lecture to the London members of the Fellowship on Dickens's Women. Mrs. Perugini was to have taken the chair but illness prevented her at the last moment from doing so. Mr. Dalton had kindly read over his notes to her a few days before the meeting, and Mrs. Perugini wrote out the following comments on the subject of his lecture.—THE EDITOR.]

AFTER listening to Mr. Dalton's very clever and delightful "Appreciation," were it necessary to offer any apology for the fact that my father did occasionally paint his heroines in shadowy colours, might it not be urged in his favour that long after he became a writer he was still a young man, with no doubt a sincere admiration for the young women of his generation which indisposed him from any dissection of their characters for the benefit of an inquisitive public. No one knew better than he, how every man worth anything at all, has his own sweet and special ideal he can always fit into an unfinished picture—and I will also claim for my father, since we are on the subject of his heroines—he had no fondness for silliness *per se*, but was rather impatient of it and kept his admiration for these members of the sex who were strong, bright and capable. It is true he dwelt with apparent delight upon Dora even in her most foolish moments, though that may have been because he had learned the secret how to make those moments lovable—and I ask you, ladies and gentlemen, do we not also take Dora to our hearts and forget both her and her author when we read her story and ask for more?

My memory is not a particularly good one, yet for some things, I have a distinct recollection and can recall vividly mid-Victorian days when women and girls of the higher and middle classes lived a pleasant if uneventful life of peace and plenty; plenty of rather monotonous amusement such as garden parties, croquet, long walks, drives and rides and in the evening, occasional rather dull dinner parties, dances and the always popular opera and theatre parties. Their mornings were occupied with the usual small domestic worries and more often than not, in looking after the interests of their poorer neighbours. Business disposed of, they managed to get through a large amount of letter-writing, embroidery and reading—normal reading and reading of a more serious character, for many of them were thoughtful in those days and greatly given to introspection, a fault no doubt of too much leisure. Their manners were gentle and unobtrusive, their voices held the low music that Shakespeare loved—now raised to shriller tones—and, as a rule, they were careful in their consideration for the feelings of those surrounding them; but they certainly had too much spare time on their hands. As an outlet for pent-up energy, they were fond of "managing" their menfolk, an art in which they excelled though often at the expense of the more difficult art of telling home truths without giving offence, which many

women of the present day achieve, with excellent results. Not a few of the Victorian ladies were timid and took rather roundabout ways in gaining their ends, whereas, the new women go direct to the point and are unafraid. But you never can tell—perhaps they may be trembling in their very decorative shoes all the time, in spite of their commanding looks and martial stride, and this is not unlikely when we remember that courage, like beauty, is often but skin-deep.

The women of the Victorian Era, however, who were not "advanced" in their views, and advancement was in the air even then, shrank modestly from encroaching upon man's domain. To undertake an occupation or a profession other than literature or painting, was to run the risk of being considered "masculine" or "unladylike," reproaches far more resented then than now, when unlike their sisters of to-day, they seemed positively bent sometimes upon effacing themselves: always a difficult thing to do in a large crinoline! Whether they succeeded or not is a secret of the past, but it is certain that for a long time they made few attempts at obtaining for themselves honours they would have been content to leave in the hands of the stronger sex, although I suspect there was latent in them all the very laudable desire to be up and doing.

The sincere admiration many felt for such daring spirits as Harriet Martineau, Florence Nightingale, Miss Clough of Newnham, Octavia Hill, Miss Buss of High School fame, and Miss Beale of Cheltenham College, paved the way to a more liberal education for their daughters, and this reminds me of a little rhyme written about these two last-distinguished ladies, by an aspiring pupil, who summed them up in these four lines:

Miss Buss and Miss Beale
Love's torments don't feel,
They leave them to us—
Miss Beale and Miss Buss.

and a very fortunate thing they did, for under their tuition schoolgirls made rapid progress on the road to enlightenment after they had mastered the lesson, that a woman does not necessarily part with her feminine qualities where she ceases to be a nonentity. The long changes that followed this discovery, uninfluenced in any way by the stand and deliver methods of the Suffragette, came about by very slow degrees and it was not until six years and three months ago, during the awful upheaval that swept away all conventional landmarks and boundaries—a new and splendid race of women seemed suddenly to spring into existence in the early autumn of 1914.

I remember an old riddle that asked: When is a lady not a lady? To which the answer was: When her bonnet becomes her. Were the question to be put to us now, as to when a lady is not a lady, we might answer: When she becomes everything she never was and that no one expected she ever could be! For so-called "ladies" who shone, more or less brightly, and idly, upon the earth's dull surface for a long period of its history were extinguished at the beginning of the war

and few are left to tell the tale. To be a woman, young or old, rich or poor, steadily working for the cause of right and justice, is to be in these days what is universally looked-up to, loved and respected, and women need seek no higher pinnacle. She has, indeed, taken her rightful place by man's side, though in reaching it she may have forfeited a little of that mysterious charm which hung about her so engagingly in his eyes—and if at times he sighs regretfully remembering the past—it is only because he is still loyal and cannot recognise in the tall and beautiful goddess who walks the earth, the more humble help-mate of his early days. Give him only a short time and he will discover she is but a new and better edition of his old loving Eve, eager to help him now in the regeneration of the world, as she was long years ago in tending with him the shrubs and flowers of their first big garden.

November, 1920.

THE SLAVERY OF GENIUS

BY ALFRED HUDSON

PROBABLY the majority of my readers have thought now and again what a clever man Dickens was, who, by the written word, has made millions weep and laugh, and even persuaded governments to amend their laws.

There is not the slightest doubt as to the depth of real gratitude and purity of veneration which the name of Dickens will ever inspire throughout the world, especially among English-speaking peoples.

Yes, Dickens was clever; but he was more than that. He was a genius, which is another matter to my way of thinking.

You love Dickens and, perhaps, might dare to wish you had been in his shoes—the grandeur of splendid attainments; the blaze of acclamation, the generous share of things material and, above all, the creator of those books which mean such a great deal to us; those characters that will always strut along down the ages.

On the other hand, and this is the point that arouses my investigation, we might speculate as to whether Dickens would not have gladly embraced another and lesser rôle in life.

The genius is born for a definite mission in life to which he is securely yoked by a restless effort which, for want of a better term, might be called the "divine urge." He is born a slave to his mission, the slavery ending only in the grave.

Anything that departs from the common standard is abnormal, and it follows that the genius, by his gifts and inspirations of uncommon order, stands quite apart from the general run of mankind. He exists primarily for the performance of those works by which we lesser lights know him, and for which we place him on high. All else becomes secondary to him—his daily life, his food, his prosperity,

his health, his love-making and our conventions. To you and me this life of the genius is the life of the slave. From our standpoint it is a life we need not envy. It matters not to us, as we do not have to live it. Sufficient for us that it is a means to a great end. If the individual himself finds some all-absorbing solace in it—some crowning success to the labour to which he is bound : if his path is marked with periods of complete self-satisfaction, then we must arrive at a just estimate of an apparently unjust existence.

We hear of people being sensitive ; but to understand what this really means we must turn to our genius. As a rule the genius is supersensitive and is probably so made in order to ensure the presence in his output, of the unusual qualities that make them great or wonderful. Strange as it may seem, Dickens suffered much personal pain and anguish in the writing of his books. By which one must not imagine that he was ever struggling with chronic rheumatism or toothache. Oh, no ; what is meant is something more beautiful. The genius is so wrought that into all his work he unfailingly puts every ounce, every drop of soul-power with which he is armed. If he writes of Death—he suffers a living death. Should he turn to humour he necessarily " splits his sides " so to speak. Slave-like, Dickens was no exception. This prolonged exercise of the emotions led to physical exhaustion and to deep inward sorrow and regrets. To bear this out I cannot do better than to quote here from letters written to John Forster. The passages, which are dated 1841, make allusion to the effect upon him of the winding-up of *The Old Curiosity Shop*, and bear chiefly on the death of Little Nell. . . . This is what he wrote :—

" You cannot imagine (gravely I write and speak) how exhausted I am to-day with yesterday's labours. I went to bed last night utterly dispirited and done up. All night I have been pursued by the child and this morning I am unrefreshed and miserable.

" I don't know what to do with myself."

. . . . . .

" This part of the story is not to be galloped over. I think it will come famously—but I am the wretchedest of the wretched. It casts the most horrible shadow over me and it is as much as I can do to keep moving at all.

" I tremble to approach the place a great deal more than Kit . . . a great deal more than Mr. Garland . . . a great deal more than the single gentleman. I shall not recover from it for a long time.

" Nobody will miss her like I shall. It is such a very painful thing to me that I really cannot express my sorrow. Old wounds only bleed afresh when I think of the way of doing it. What the actual doing will be, God knows."

. . . . . .

" When I first began to keep my thoughts on this ending of the tale I resolved to try and do something which might be read by people about whom death had been . . . with a softened feeling and with consolation. Last night I took my desk upstairs and—writing until four o'clock this morning—finished the old story. It makes me feel very melancholy to think that all these people are lost to me for

ever, and I feel as if I never could become attached to any new set of characters."

There are many other similar examples in connection with some of Dickens's other books, but this brief peep behind the scenes should make us realise that works of lasting quality are produced at a price. And it will also be now understood that whenever a reader weeps with Dickens, Dickens has already wept before, and deeper.

The private life of Dickens, from the cradle to the grave was, I venture to think, pre-ordained as a tool in his workshop, so to speak. This life hovers at times in the deepest shades, and in parts soars in the sunlight. And so would it seem he was destined to cry bitterly and laugh hysterically, thus being enabled, at first hand, to reveal to his fellows the existing values of life in all its phases.

Dickens lived 58 years on this earth, and from the beginning to the end he must have sped, slave-like, before the unrelenting lash of Higher Intelligence. We learn of no small measure of sadness in that life. He survived it gloriously, however, and made the greatest possible use of the circumstances, and in so doing fashioned good from evil.

Would he have been able to exercise his pre-eminent powers had he not been forced to drink deeply of misery—misery that in the turn of the wheel surely served to sharpen his sense of humour? Without the contrasting influences would his superb humour be what it is? To my mind, it would not.

His bondage demanded his rubbing shoulders with the World, and this he did from the Blacking Warehouse to Gad's Hill.

From the poor miserable boy, refined, supersensitive and capable of the grandest flights of fancy; hoping beyond hope for the miraculous transformation from his squalor to the rose-scented environment for which his little heart literally ached. From that, I say, and on through the many deaths he underwent in his personal bereavements; father, mother, brothers, sisters, and beloved children—flowers that were ruthlessly gathered in their bloom. From that again onwards to the nest of retirement—to the self-same shelter on which, as the miserable boy, he had gazed with a sickening, forlorn hope.

The acquirement of Gad's Hill was the realization of Dickens's fondest dream, and yet it became the stage for one of the most poignant chapters in his career. It was here that the cricket on his hearth ceased to chirp. In spite of circumstances calculated to bend a man low, there still ruled within him and to the end, that relentless urge to write and do.

The personal character of Dickens is one that may be viewed in full daylight. He was a devout Christian, a beloved father and husband. He wrote a "Life of Christ" for his children. To these fine traits are to be added the ordinary qualities of a good man and true.

It is a very strange thing to us, perhaps, that men of genius have had for wives the sweetest and most reasonable of women, only to find that the unions ultimately have produced no lasting satisfaction. Without enlarging on the point, perhaps you will all share my speculation that therein lies another penalty involved in the slavery of genius.

The Home of the Man in the Monument

"They don't know what a many steps there is .... It's worth twice the money to stop here. Oh my eye!"—(*Martin Chuzzlewit.*)

Photograph specially taken for "The Dickensian" in 1933 *by Wm. A. Clark, F.R.P.S.*

A BELIEVER'S HERESIES

By J. W. T. LEY

(*Continued from page* 127)

Of course, really these faults are Dickens's merits, but "art's the thing," and your modern cultist would rather see Tess hanged in the last chapter than Little Em'ly happily married. I would not. I suppose it's a matter of temperament.

One of "Scrogs's" supporters in the discussion under notice declared that as a stylist Dickens was not worthy to tie R. L. Stevenson's bootlace. As though it would matter, anyway! I think Stevenson's style has been greatly overestimated. It has degenerated into a cult. His style is artificial—self-conscious. I say that and duck my head to dodge the inevitable brick-bats! But that is not quite the point. Was Dickens a competent writer from the point of view of style? Well, we may concede something on this point. He was not Thackeray's equal for certain. But there really is very little the matter with his style. I count style the conveying to others, without real offence against the King's English (I don't object always to minor offences), exactly what one wishes to convey. When does Dickens fail to pass this test? I know that he often overdoes it. His sentiment is over-emphasised at times until one grows tired. He makes "bloomers" occasionally. He speaks in *Pickwick*, for instance, of the "latter" of three things, an offence for which one might hesitate to forgive a junior reporter. In *Nicholas Nickleby* he uses "invite" as a noun, while he tells us that Fagin is to be "hung" instead of "hanged." These are faults into which most of our writers fall, and I could quote much more numerous instances of carelessness from Thackeray's books. Dickens does not use the split infinitive, and he does not say "different to." Both Thackeray and Scott commit this latter unpardonable offence. His style was good enough to enable him to say what he wanted to say, and to say it with the proper emphasis, without having recourse to italics, and, after all, what more should we want? In this respect, at any rate, he is superior to half our modern novelists, who find it necessary to use italics or "small caps" continually, and who would regard it as a duty unfulfilled if they did not work in a French phrase about every third page. These are conclusive evidences of weakness in any writer, and it is something in Dickens's favour that they cannot be charged against him.

I suppose the description of Dickens as "a glorified reporter" was meant to be scathing. I cannot be expected to regard it like that! I think it is true that his style was journalistic, and his observance and apt use of trifles is evidence of the possession to an exceptional degree of that somewhat rare quality which is vaguely defined as "journalistic instinct." But, after all, what was Addison but a journalist? All the "Essays of Elia" were journalistic productions. I'm not going to quarrel with the description of Dickens as "a glorified reporter." You see, the magic lies in the glorification.

But on this question of Dickens's style I can call in aid one of our

best living authorities. The opinion of Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch on such a subject is worthy of respect, and he has written : " Let any one study, for a test, the seventeenth chapter of *The Old Curiosity Shop*, and (setting aside one flagrant misuse of the word ' aggravate ') he must feel himself in company with a writer who knows the old tradition and delights in it."

May I point out one important fact ? Dickens knew Shakespeare and Addison by heart, and for years he never went to bed without Goldsmith under his arm. Fielding and Smollett and Defoe he knew as a tiny boy more thoroughly even than the present-day boy knows " Comic Cuts." Only authors of this class did he know at all up to the time he began to write : indeed, he knew few others all his life, and certainly none so well. He had absorbed them ; he knew them through and through. It is ridiculous to say that a man fed on such food, who could write at all, was utterly devoid of style.

" Scrogs " says that Dickens was devoid of humour and pathos. He does not stand alone. The point is that " Scrogs " will say that the bulk of Dickens's humour is farce and not humour at all. And a lot of it is. The Sapsea epitaph in *Edwin Drood*, for instance ; almost all the scenes in which Mr. Boffin appears in *Our Mutual Friend* ; certainly many incidents in *Pickwick* ; the Mantilini incidents in *Nicholas Nickleby*. But it is silly to talk nonsense, isn't it ? If Sergeant Buzfuz's speech in *Pickwick* is not true humour, " King Lear " is not a tragedy. It is almost the cleverest piece of humour in our language. And one of the few examples that surpass it is the quarrel between Sairey Gamp and Betsey Prig. If Dickens is not a humorist he is nothing at all. Call him a master of pathos if you like, but his pathos hangs upon his humour. One of the funniest facts with which I am confronted in life is Dickens's popularity with masses of people who have no sense of humour. It is because they are unliterary and are swayed by the sentimentality to which he degenerates when he forgets that he is a humorist. He's a curious man, isn't he, who, though he never reads a book by any other author than Dickens, will not go to the theatre to see Sir John Martin Harvey in " The Only Way," because he was brought up to believe that the theatre is an emanation from hell ? I know such a man—a clever business man, too. Plenty of people who sentimentalise over the Marchioness are perfectly blind to the fact that the pathos of that creature's condition is only driven home to the reader by humour. You may laugh as uproariously as you like when Jerome K. Jerome makes a man in a boat that is drifting towards the weir wish that he had learned more hymns when a boy. It is funny, of course, but the very highest form of humour is that which puts us in two minds—whether to laugh or to swallow that lump in the throat. I would love to quote, but I dare not. I could quote for a couple of hours, but I could not quote any incident in which Dickens makes us sob without first of all tickling us. The Cratchits' household, for instance. You have been impressed with the pathos of it all a good many times, I hope, but I am very sure you have never resisted the smile. George

Gissing quotes an example which is almost as good as any. Sally Brass gives the poor little Marchioness her dinner—just two square inches of meat, says Dickens. You smile, but as you smile you sort of pull yourself up, and say, " What a shame ! " and henceforth you feel a humane pity (I hate that word, but it serves) for the wretched little drudge. In the same book, Kit Nubbles takes his mother and the younger children to the gallery of the Surrey Theatre, and you may remember their unrestrained enjoyment. You have laughed at it often, I have no doubt, but before you have finished laughing has not the thought come to you, " What a tragedy it is that so little should mean so much to these good, honest people ? " Humour is not humour at all if it causes us to laugh and not think—without pulling us up suddenly, as it were, just as we are going to laugh. You don't need to be a humorist to know how to use the slapstick. Humour, in short, is very nearly indeed allied to pathos. It is only when Dickens forgets that he is a humorist that his pathos shows signs of degenerating into bathos. And if he gives us farce, so does Shakespeare, and who dares to say that farce is not a legitimate form of art ?

As to Dickens's pathos, it must be admitted that the critics do stand upon rather firmer ground. There is a big germ of truth in what they say on that point. It is true, I think, that Little Nell is a tedious character very often, that her creator " slobbers " over her far too much. There is a palpable striving after effect. She, herself, is hardly real, while the passages describing her death seem to me to betray their author's love for the stage. We all love her, but I think few will be prepared to assert that she is quite human. I know, however, that the world wept at her death, and so I am indisposed to criticism. Little Paul, too, seems to me not to be quite real, and in the passages describing his death, there again is an obvious striving after effect. Indeed, in most of Dickens's pathetic scenes is to be found a somewhat theatrical elaboration. Never, however, is there any suggestion of insincerity. Indeed, the very fault that we are noting arises from the intense earnestness and sincerity of the author. All the pathos with which he surrounded his child characters was the result of his burning desire to enlist the sympathies of his readers with children, and in order to attain this end he naturally endeavoured to make the pathos as effective as possible. Thus arises that straining after effect which I have noted. The result is often inartistic, and so, of course, to the man who reads a novel with his eyes closed to everything but the story and the " art," the pathos becomes bathos and the sentiment " mawkish." But to the man who understands Dickens and the spirit in which he wrote, the effect of this pathos and sentiment is entirely different. There are, however, specimens of Dickens's pathos which are not open to this criticism. There is nothing artificial in the death of David Copperfield's child-wife, or in the scenes in *Little Dorrit*, of which the father of the Marshalsea is the central figure, or in some of the Fleet Prison incidents in *Pickwick*, or in the story of Caleb Plummer and his blind daughter.

There remains one more point in "Scrogs's" letter. It is the assertion that Dickens lacked insight into human nature. I can't be bothered to deal with that! Life's too short to argue with the man who says that Marshal Foch had not the most rudimentary notions of strategy. And so I'll come to the question that I promised to ask ultimately. I have conceded a great deal to "Scrogs" and company. I have granted that Dickens was not a success at the constructing of a novel; that he was neither a Pater nor an Addison in the matter of style; that some of his humour is exaggerated; that much of his pathos is overdone. And my question is this: How has it come about that for thirty-three years he was the most popular living novelist, and that to-day—sixty-three years after his death—his popularity shows no sign of waning? I may here quote from a now-forgotten book, published in 1854. "I remember well," says the writer, "how one afternoon I braved a fierce north-east gale . . . for no other purpose than to possess *The Cricket on the Hearth*, which I had seen advertised as a 'Fairy Tale of Home,' by the author of *Oliver Twist*. . . . I manfully faced the storm . . . homeward went . . . and straightway fell to work at the leaves of the 'Fairy Tale of Home.' (What quackery, false pretension, and swindling lurk in the title of a book!) I begin to read—'chirp, chirp, chirp,' 'hum, hum, hum,' with an essay from a Mrs. Peerybingle and infantine slang respecting the 'mill' between a kettle and a cricket . . . led me by the nose to page twenty-four, or thereabouts, when 'chirp, chirp, chirp,' 'hum, hum, hum,' were met with again, and conducted me to a carrier in love with one Dot and his bacon. I tried to discover some hidden meaning or floweret beneath this most villainous rubbish, but I could not. . . . It is . . . a half and half of pap and treacle beer; though too gritty withal to make into decent shaving paper, *yet has this squeaking, penny, trumpery trash not only gone through twenty editions, but been acted on half the recreant boards of Great Britain!*"

I have quoted this primarily for the sake of the last sentence. That indicates the difficulty up against which all these detractors of Dickens find themselves. Let them say what they like; the fact remains eternally facing them that the man who wrote all this "squeaking, penny trumpery trash" has been for more than ninety years the most popular and the most loved author that the world has ever seen. It is the same with the man as with his books. A certain class of critic is continually insisting that Dickens was not a gentleman; that he was irritable, dogmatic, aggressively autocratic, irritable beyond endurance. Yet the fact is that, while he was regarded by the masses who did not know him personally with an affection unique among our authors, he was regarded in exactly the same way by those who knew him intimately. I *do* know what I am talking about when I say that. No man alive has read more than I have about Dickens's personal relations with his friends and with the famous men of his time, and I declare that I have met only two persons who had anything to say against the man—and they only did not like him; had nothing definite against him. One of these was a journalist who, in two books of reminiscences

in which he speaks of scores of well-known men, has not an unqualified good word to say of half a dozen at the most, and the other was a lady—daughter of a famous man who loved Dickens and cherished his memory.

As with the man, so with his books. If the man was so vulgar, why was he so loved by all who knew him? If his books are so crude, so inept, why are they the best sellers that any publisher can put on the market? I'll tell you why. Mr. Walter Crotch has written, "Dickens had not the brainy gifts nor the polished word-artifice of Meredith, nor the meditative profundity and architectural finish of Thomas Hardy; nor the peculiar *impressive nerveuse* of Henry James; nor the philosophic reach or world-touch of Joseph Conrad. But Dickens has, even for to-day, what I venture to say none of these great writers has, a luxuriant whimsicality as well as a wealth of humour which miraculously enlarge and vivify our most familiar and our most common experiences." That is Mr. Crotch's answer to the inquiry "Why is Dickens Popular?" My answer is not quite the same. My answer is that Dickens is popular because every book he ever wrote is inspired by the one thing that matters in all eternity—Love; or if you like—it is the same thing—Charity. He had had a hard childhood; he had found little sympathy in the world; he had been buffeted about, and had been allowed to suffer mentally and physically; he had known the most sordid poverty; he had known the most soul-destroying drudgery before he wrote a book. His was not the experience that a Thomas Hardy tells us is the experience of all men. He had not a childhood free from care, full of glorious dreams, with disillusionment following. His childhood was a miserable one—how miserable it must have been to a child of his sensitive temperament none of us can hope to realise. Yet at 24 years of age he sprang before the world as the most buoyant, the most joyous, writer that any country had ever known. That is the secret of his popularity. Life, to him, was worth living, was a glorious adventure, a splendid romance. This world, to him, was a wondrous place. Men, to him, were truly God-created—truly created in God's own image. In his philosophy, God *is* in His Heaven, all *is* right with the world. In his philosophy, though the skies are dull here in November, and though the winds blow cruelly here in March, it is always summer somewhere in the world, and it will be summer here in June. And if the snow comes in January well, see that the fire is blazing brightly, draw the curtains, shut out the draught, pour a spot or two out of the decanter, and thank God you are alive. In his philosophy it really is a decent sort of world—nay, a jolly fine world, to live in.

Is not that the Dickensian philosophy? Is not that the lesson that runs through every book he ever wrote? He came—upon my word, sent, I believe, as surely as Isaiah was sent, by Him who made men—he came to this world with a cheery, gladsome message—a message, as the late Dean Stanley said, of brotherly love, of sympathy, in the highest sense of the word. He came at a time similar to the times in which we live. He was born three years before Waterloo, when

the world was in a state of upheaval comparable only with the last few years. Waterloo was within the memory of very young men when *Pickwick* was written. The wondrous new world—" fit for heroes to live in "—that had been dreamed of had not come into being. He was, in fact, destined to be one of the real builders of the new world which the Victorian Era produced. But at this time people were growing restive. " Direct actionists " were asserting themselves. The mighty product of a nation in travail—as all the world's greatest creative writers have been—Dickens took his place in history at exactly the right moment. " There's a Divinity that shapes our ends." There never was a great crisis in history that did not produce the great man. If you ask where is that man now, I answer that he may yet be in the nursery, as Dickens, Thackeray, Tennyson, Gladstone were when Waterloo was fought. What are ten years in the destiny of Man ? Is Cromwell's work finished yet ? Is Lincoln's much more than begun ? As now, with Wilhelm scotched, so a hundred years ago with Napoleon at St. Helena, the masses imagined that the Millenium would arrive in about five minutes. Yet the men who were to build upon the foundations just laid were, as I have said, still in the nursery. The Divine Order, in fact, is Evolution, not Revolution.

And Dickens suddenly sprang before the world with a sunniness that dispersed heavy banks of clouds. With suspicion and dissatisfaction rampant in the land, he proclaimed his great message—the great Truth that this world is really a jolly fine place and that men are really very decent sorts. At a time when it was greatly needed he taught mutual confidence. He pleaded and fought for the poor, but he taught consistently that class warfare is an accursed thing. He showed that men are all children of the same Father ; that all men are human—with the same human frailties certainly, but far more important—with the same Divine qualities in them. He taught mutual trust and confidence. He taught, if I may put it so, that the story told in the Book of Genesis is true—that men are fundamentally good—in short, he insisted that the story of the Fall is true ; that men have disobeyed the Divine injunction and eaten of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil ; that in consequence the gates of Eden are closed to them, but that those gates will be opened to them again some day, that the Gate-keeper is ever at His post waiting to open whensoever men are fit to re-enter the Garden. He taught that there really is one far-off Divine event to which the whole creation moves.

He never taught, or sought to teach, that all was well—that all was for the best in this best of all possible worlds. His was not an inane, fatuous, blindly unthinking optimism. How should he have been so popular with the masses if it had been so ? But he did teach, not only that every man has great potentialities for good, but that every man, deep down in his heart, really and truly desires to do good. He had Faith in his fellows. He believed that most men really mean well, and that no man is wholly bad. That is what he preached always.

Dickens taught in every book, in every short story, in every newspaper and magazine article he ever wrote, in almost every speech he made, that "God is good, and hearts may count in Heaven as high as heads." He taught the greatest of all lessons: "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." We may admit, if we like, for the sake of argument, that he was not a great novelist, but no one who knows anything about the man and his books can deny that he was a great and a good man. He was given a genius which enabled him to sway a world for good or for evil and he used it for good. He made the best use of the talents which had been given him, and strove to leave the world better than he had found it. His books tell us this quite plainly. In every one of them there is a battle between good and evil, and good always wins. In every one of them there is an earnest plea for the down-trodden and distressed. In every one of them we are shown that there are goodness and happiness in the world as well as wickedness and misery, and that they are both to be found and enjoyed if only we choose to look for them. This is the solution of the mystery which so sorely puzzled "Scrogs." And this is why his memory is blessed to-day by thousands who know nothing of the man, as that of a friend who laughed with them when they were were merry, who sorrowed with them when they were sorrowful. All who knew the man confirm Carlyle's estimate of him: "The good, the gentle, high-gifted, ever friendly, noble Dickens—every inch of him an honest man." It is this that will keep his memory green, for as long as his countrymen love manliness and his countrywomen womanliness.

DICKENS'S LOVE FOR WORDSWORTH

"DICKENS had little love for Wordsworth."

So wrote John Forster in 1871, and the paragraph in the *Life of Charles Dickens* where this assertion occurs is the only one throughout the entire work which contains any mention of the illustrious poet.

It has been shown that some of the "harbitrary gent's" most definite pronouncements may be doubted with good reason, and in his annotated edition of Forster's Biography, Mr. J. W. T. Ley has dealt tactfully but firmly with more than one inaccuracy of fact or judgment. As regards the attitude of Dickens towards the author of "The Excursion," we believe that Forster's dictum is misleading, for it can be proved that, at one time at least, the creator of Pickwick was a sincere admirer of Wordsworth, the man and the poet.

Among the friends who attended the dinner given by Dickens to celebrate the completion of *Nicholas Nickleby*, David Wilkie, then at the height of his artistic career, was one of the most honoured guests. In his letter of invitation to the painter, Dickens had thus expressed himself:—

"On Saturday, the fifth of October, I have a little dinner at the Albion in Aldersgate Street, to celebrate the conclusion of *Nickleby*.

It is merely to the parties concerned in the publication and one or two intimate friends—not more than a dozen in all. Will you give me an additional reason for remembering the occasion with pleasure by joining this quiet party ? I cannot tell you how happy I should be to see you, and how much true pleasure and delight your company will afford me. . . ."

Forster describing the festivity, writes : ". . . And there was the painter of the Rent-day, who made a speech as good as his pictures, rich in colour and quaint with homely allusion. . . ."

Of the memorable gathering Wilkie himself has left us an entertaining account in the following paragraphs of a letter dated October 14th, 1839, and addressed to his friend Mrs. Ricketts :—

". . . From Lowther Castle I had to hurry on to town to be present at a scene, to which some of the gentle readers in your house would have possessed some claim ; it was to be present at a fiesta given by Mr. Dickens to the publishers, printers and artist, with various of his friends, about 20 in all, on the completion of *Nicholas Nickleby*. It was at the Albion, Aldersgate Street. Mr. Dickens, our host, was in the chair, and Mr. Macready, to whom the work was dedicated, was on his right hand and had to propose his health. Though a master of elocution, the occasion seemed to deprive him of the advantage this might be expected to give a speaker. But one passage, for the advantage of Miss Taylor and Miss Anna, I will venture to repeat. In remarking on the peculiar style of Mr. Dickens, he admired that faculty of supplying to the reader not merely the bold adventure and the startling incident, but was equally happy in all the little details and minute feelings of the every-day intercourse of life, so finely, as he said, characterised in the lines of Wordsworth as :—

> Those nameless and unremembered acts
> That make the best part of a good man's life.

This led Mr. Dickens to speak to me of Mr. Wordsworth . . . and to express a very great admiration for his genius, of which he thought the little poem of ' We are Seven ' was one of the most striking examples. What he seemed to like in this was divesting death of its horror, by treating it as a separation and not an extinction. He deprecated what in families occurred of never alluding to a near relation deceased ; said he lately met with a severe loss, but took every pains to recall the person deceased to his family about him. My talented friend rose very much in my mind by this reflection on the work of our great poet, and I repeat it, supposing that on yourself and the readers of his writings around you it will have the same effect. . . ."

In the above account of the *Nickleby* dinner, written a few days after the event, we find yet another point of disagreement with the recollections of Forster published more than thirty years later. Whereas Wilkie appears to have been distinctly disappointed with Macready's speech Forster recalled that the tragedian, in proposing the health of Dickens, " spoke of his sense of the honour done him by the dedication, in English as good as his delivery of it." A. S.

A GREAT DEBATE

MR. SHAW DESMOND v. MR. J. H. McNULTY

SPECIALLY REPORTED BY KATE WOODFIELD

IN the Old Hall, Lincolns Inn, on Friday, 10th February, these two eminent Dickensians met to debate on the following :—

That Charles Dickens, although in many respects the greatest character writer the novel has known, failed whenever he tried to tell a story and had at times a tendency to sickly sentimentality and nearly always failed when he tried to portray a straight character.

The Hall was filled to capacity, and the audience listened attentively whilst Mr. Shaw Desmond, who opened the Debate, expounded his point of view in a brilliant and illuminating manner. Mr. McNulty's arguments on the negative side were so forceful that his opponent's case was well-nigh destroyed at the outset. Mr. Shaw Desmond raised many interesting points which clearly indicated a thoroughly intimate knowledge of Dickens's works. This, coupled with a considerable number of clever witticisms, stimulated enthusiasm and keenness to such an extent that many among the audience felt a strong desire to ask for more.

The Chairman, Mr. T. W. Hill, in briefly introducing Mr. Shaw Desmond, was in very happy form, and after a few remarks, settled himself to enjoy the treat which he knew was in store.

In the following pages will be found extracts from the viewpoints of the respective "adversaries," a perusal of which will clearly indicate what an enjoyable evening was experienced by those "hardy" Dickensians who braved the elements on that occasion. At least they have the satisfaction of knowing that they were well rewarded.

MR. SHAW DESMOND :—

Mr. Chairman and fellow-lovers of Dickens, I am getting up because the resolution demands that I must, though I sincerely trust it will not be carried. I do not suppose any other author in the world could bring out an audience like this on such a night. Nor do I believe that there is another writer whose works sell in such large numbers as Dickens's books are still selling.

You may be interested to hear what I am going to tell you. Surely there is no woman or man in this audience who has read some books of Dickens quite as many times as the person who is speaking. I have read *Martin Chuzzlewit* over one hundred times. As regards *David Copperfield*, I almost know every word of it. Parts of *Martin Chuzzlewit* may escape me now because it is many years since I read it. *Pickwick Papers* I have read fifty or sixty times. I have been reading again quite recently *Our Mutual Friend*, and that in spite of the fact that I am also reading at the same time works by some modern writers.

You must always remember that in a debate of this kind the delightful thing about it is that the opposing parties are quite agreed really on

all the main points of the debate. It reminds me of something which happened in a New York town five or six years ago when I was debating on a certain topic, and we discovered when we occupied the platform to our horror that we were in perfect agreement on every point. I sincerely trust that is not going to happen to-night.

Do you realise that Dickens is the exact opposite of everything the Irishman thinks ? As a child, I had never even seen any book by him. So far as I remember, I saw my first copy when I came to London as a lawyer, a beautifully bound volume of Charles Dickens. On that particular morning, I remember, I had done several things which may earn a very warm reception in another world. I hope that that action will outweigh them, and give me a favourable balance the other way.

To come more personally to the point of the debate—" That Charles Dickens, although in many respects the greatest character writer the novel has known, failed whenever he tried to tell a story and had at times a tendency to sickly sentimentality and nearly always failed when he tried to portray a straight character "—I just want to say very sincerely the following things about that Resolution. In the first place, I, as a psychological novelist, have always held that a really great novelist should always refrain from telling a story if he could possibly avoid it. The great psychological novelists have always avoided it if possible. The first business of a novelist is not necessarily to tell the story. The essential task is analysis of character, and if he tells a story, well and good ; but the story is not the essential thing.

Then as to sentimentality. I come from a country which has practically no sentiment. As a nation we have another thing altogether—logic. The English are the most sentimental people in Europe, except the Germans. I wish to heaven the Irish had a little less logic, because then we could learn from our English friends : and they could learn from us. No Englishman knows anything about logic ; but the English always beat us where sentiment is concerned.

Now, as regards Dickens being the greatest character writer that the world has ever known. I always regard Dickens with great admiration, except over the titles of some of his books. But when we come to this question of character drawing, Mr. E. M. Forster, in his " Aspects of the Modern Novel," says about Dickens something which I wish I had said. I am not a critic. A critic is nearly always what the French call " the artist who has fled." I wish to goodness the English had remembered their great heritage of Charles Dickens instead of reading the trash of such writers as, among others, Edgar Wallace. The majority of his books never had really any great literature in any shape or form.

Reverting to this question of character, what Mr. E. M. Forster says about the Dickens character is this : all the Dickens characters are what he calls " flat, not round." No matter how you look at Pickwick, he says, you will only see Pickwick. He is always Pickwick. Similarly, Pecksniff is always Pecksniff. Never once does Pecksniff do a single thing you do not expect him to do. This is always so with the

Dickens character. You will see, therefore, that when I am speaking of character I mean those who are flat. They never do unexpected things—you always know what they will do.

You will also understand that when I say he did not tell a good story I am not saying anything against Dickens. I think it is entirely to his credit that he did not tell a good story. Are you sure that I am not meaning plot more than story? He does tell a good *story*, but the story itself is always inferior to the master of character that is Charles Dickens. His characters such as Pickwick, Pecksniff, Bailey, Sam Weller, etc., all of whom walk across the stage: they live with us for ever and for ever. Dickens will live as long almost as Shakespeare. He will live and go on living. The reason is so obvious. There is nobody in the world that can draw the particular kind of character that Dickens draws. No modern novelist, with one or two exceptions, has the power to make his figures live and move and have their being, so that they remain apart from the reader and yet become part of the reader. None of the modern novelists can make their characters live and stand out so that they are the personal friends of the reader. Dickens is a good man to die with. You can say that about hardly any modern novelist. And Dickens is like "Robinson Crusoe" and books of that kind—you feel that he is part of yourself.

I still contend that whenever Dickens tries to speak about what I call "straight characters" he always fails. What do I mean by "straight" characters? I mean characters which are not "pure." Whenever you get a "straight" character, like Ruth Pinch, you get the most thorough, ghastly, sickly sentimentality that you ever met. It makes me shudder! To illustrate my point, I will read you this portion of *Martin Chuzzlewit*, where, you will remember, Ruth meets John in the Temple.

[We quote here only the concluding paragraphs.]

"So light was the touch of the coy little hand, that he glanced down to assure himself he had it on his arm. But his glance, stopping for an instant at the bright eyes, forgot its first design, and went no farther.

"They walked up and down three or four times, speaking about Tom and his mysterious employment. Now that was a very natural and innocent subject, surely. Then why, whenever Ruth lifted up her eyes, did she let them fall again immediately, and seek the uncongenial pavement of the court? They were not such eyes as shun the light; they were not such eyes as require to be hoarded to enhance their value. They were much too precious and too genuine to stand in need of arts like those. Somebody must have been looking at them."

To me that is saccharine! It is sugary!

I fear that many of my friends present are disgusted to hear that said about Ruth. But it is only because they are like those people who do not understand Bach's Fugues. Some of my friends will remember when they are older not only in years but intellectually, and will see and understand when I say that that is poor writing.

Dickens had that heaven-sent seventh sense for the curious, the peculiar. Perhaps a man had one shoulder higher than the other,

or perhaps his head leaned one way or the other. Such little, queer turns made all the difference. There are now no people who can write like Dickens wrote. Sometimes Priestley is compared with Dickens. I have read "Good Companions." But I have hardly ever seen the recent "best seller" (with one or two exceptions) that was worth reading.

Dickens was profoundly moral—yes, in spite of "This Side Idolatry." As far as Dickens is concerned he certainly had that extraordinary moral sense. That must seem dreadful to some of you! A writer must be completely neutral. Dickens was so tender-hearted, in a sense, that when he came up against something dreadful he turned his head away. A really great artist must be hard as steel, yet soft as the heart of a rose. If Dickens could have kept his great heart, yet at the same time have kept his perfectly neutral head, he would have been a far greater writer than anybody has ever been. Dickens was great at propaganda; but you should never let propaganda come into any book. I said to some young writers the other day—the reason you cannot write is simply this: because you have not managed to keep propaganda out of your novels you have no affection behind your work. The man who writes a great book must be full of affection for something or other, and then must put that affection forward. If he does put it in, it is like the woman who touched the hem of Christ's garment. He felt virtue go out of Him.

Dickens sometimes wanders all about the place; he will lead you down the garden! But remember this; in spite of anything you may have read, the question nowadays against him is not that book I mentioned a short time ago. And do not forget this: no truly great man, no man could have really written this great stuff that Dickens wrote if he had been only a master of the pen. He was also a master of the human heart, and the human emotions. In other words, I say, although it goes to some extent against myself, that Charles Dickens was a great man personally, and a great novelist after.

Mr. J. H. McNULTY:—

I entirely disagree with you about Dickens's titles. Many of them, I confess, are not good—*Barnaby Rudge*, for instance; but I think *Great Expectations* and *Our Mutual Friend* are admirable. Since Dickens used "our mutual friend," no one is going to say "our common friend."

As to his characters, I admit that you sometimes know what Dickens characters are going to do. But I can see no reason in any of the actions of the Russian characters. You never know what *they* are going to do. I should like to know if there is some reason at the back of them which I have failed to discover. Now, anyone who reads *A Tale of Two Cities* would never guess that Sydney Carton would go to the guillotine. If you did guess it you would be very clever. No one could guess that Montague Tigg would ever become the distinguished company promoter. I could never imagine that the convict whom Pip saved on the marshes was ever likely to come along later and help Pip. That was absolutely unexpected.

I do not admit that Dickens did not tell a good story. There is only one of his books where he really very skilfully avoided telling a story, and that was the *Pickwick Papers*. He told a story on certain occasions extremely well. I think he told *Martin Chuzzlewit* very well indeed ; he depicted the effect of prosperity, and adversity on different characters. I am not going to deal with the novels where to the story is not so good. In my opinion *Barnaby Rudge* is as good a story as any historical novel. The story of *A Tale of Two Cities* is admirably told, and I do not think there is any storyteller who could have told it better. *Great Expectations* is a perfectly wonderful story, told with cleverness and skill. The characters are interesting, the story is extremely important, and very beautiful. If Dickens had never finished *Bleak House* no one would have ever guessed who killed Mr. Tulkinghorn. That story is wonderfully well told. It would have aroused just as much controversy as there has been over the tale of *Edwin Drood. That* story is extremely successful : it has kept all the world guessing ever since. Everybody differs about its solution. So it is clear that Dickens did not always fail in telling a story. He always told one fairly well, and in several instances amazingly well.

Turn to the accusation of sickly sentimentality. Here I am not only answering Mr. Shaw Desmond, but a number of other critics as well. Mr. Shaw Desmond quotes Ruth Pinch and John Westlock. The very passages that are chosen as " sickly sentimental " to-day are exactly the passages our fathers and mothers loved. What makes the modern critic laugh made *them* weep, and no one knows whether their tears were not just as good as our laughter. Dickens is sentimental judged by the standards of to-day ; so were most of the Victorians. But no one can decide whether their sentimentality was not quite as true and genuine, and as good art, as our cynicism. Some of our cynical prose is ridiculous. This matter we are discussing is a matter of taste, not a question of morals. We are dealing with something that is always changing.

" It is no use disputing about questions of taste," said Horace, but it is a pleasure to do so with so distinguished an opponent as Mr. Shaw Desmond, so long as we are not too dogmatic. This is my " cautionary tale " for incautious critics ; this is my little sermon on imprudence ; this is the red light of danger. Don't be too dogmatic ; don't be too cocksure ; don't be too certain ; don't be too Shaw Desmond. There is definite proof that the parts of Dickens which are often condemned by some to be " sickly sentimental " are not so at all. Take such a writer as Macaulay. The characteristics of Macaulay's work are an entire lack of sentiment, and a very materialistic outlook. *Good* to Macaulay means something good to eat, and Macaulay said that he had been moved to tears by Florence Dombey. Hard-hearted Jeffrey wept over the death of little Nell. Cynical Thackeray read the particular number containing the death of Paul Dombey, put it in his pocket, went off to the office of " Punch," and threw it on the table in front of Mark Lemon, saying : " It is no use writing against this. I have not an atom of a chance. It is stupendous ! " Jeffrey said

of Little Nell, there has been "Nothing so good since Cordelia." Andrew Lang, who was a pretty clear-headed critic, having criticised the death of little Dombey, suddenly ended by saying, "Our Dickens is perfect."

Mr. Desmond seems to think that a novelist ought to look on all things equally and not take sides. Judged in this way Shakespeare stands condemned, because he is definitely moral. If Dickens is to be condemned because he is not impartial between vice and virtue, and right and wrong, so must Shakespeare. I suppose it is something of an honour to be banished in company with Shakespeare.

As examples of straight character you may take Sir Leicester Dedlock, a perfect gentleman, drawn without any exaggeration. There are plenty of business men like Mr. Dombey, thoroughly upright, but extremely proud. There are many such men, as well as clerks like Mr. Carker, the Manager, and Carker, Junior. I do not think really there is a touch of exaggeration in them. Take another character, who may not appear very interesting, but who has a peculiar interest for us to-day—Mr. Merdle, the company promoter. *He* committed suicide. Quite a common thing among company promoters. Company promoters are always stupid; only less stupid than their dupes. Mr. and Mrs. Wilfer are straight characters; a somewhat magnificent wife, and a completely sat upon husband. They are without a vestige of exaggeration. Bob Cratchit is a very good example of an under-paid clerk, but, perhaps, clerks are better paid now. Old Chuffey is a perfect picture of the old, superannuated, faithful servant. Mr. and Mrs. Boffin, old Mr. Weller and his disagreeable wife, are perfect examples of straight characters.

Perhaps Mr. Shaw Desmond will say that these are exceptions. It is true that the exception proves the rule, but too many exceptions prove that there is no rule to be proved. The number of exceptions I have given you I have curtailed because of the look on the face of the chairman's watch and of the look on *his* face. After all, the sun would still be the sun for all the spots. I do say, however, that the spots Mr. Shaw Desmond has discovered are not the real spots. Dickens often *did* tell a good story, so he did not always fail to tell a story. The "sickly sentimentality" is only apparent to some of us because we are in an age which is saturated with cynicism. Dickens did draw straight characters, because, apart from the great characters in his books, there is a whole host of ordinary people not so much unlike ourselves. No doubt my opponent thinks he has proved his case, and I unquestionably think that I have proved mine.

* * * * *

Mr. T. W. Hill, who was a very able chairman, made a few remarks and the meeting was then thrown open for discussion. Many members gave their views on certain of the points raised by one or other of the debaters, and varied were the opinions expressed. One of the speakers very cleverly commented upon the numerous criticisms of Dickens and his work in these words: "If you want a person's faults go to

those who love him." If that be true Dickens lovers must be legion. When those who have "criticised" are included with those who are admittedly Dickensians, the army must be indeed innumerable.

On being put to the vote, Mr. McNulty won by an overwhelming majority; but in spite of that fact it was the universal opinion that Mr. Shaw Desmond had made his case not only interesting, but had proved beyond question that he is verily an enthusiastic Dickensian and a sincere and ardent lover of our author and his works.

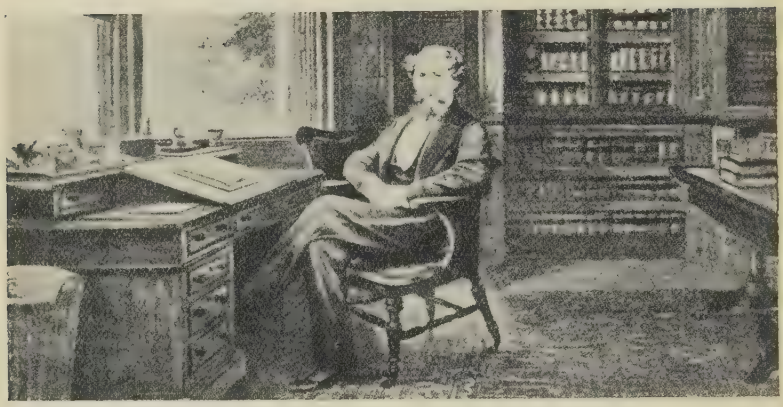
A hearty vote of thanks was proposed and unanimously accorded.

DICKENS AS AN AID TO TRADE

DICKENS is not only still the best seller, but he is also recognised as the best salesman. We have in the past published many evidences of the use of Dickens as an advertising medium. *The Pickwick Papers* have again been harnessed for this purpose, and an excellent

series of new illustrations to favourite incidents has lately been seen in the press to advertise Diploma Cheese. One example is reproduced herewith; another will be found on page 215. The letterpress accompanying the drawings is excellent parody.

PEEPS AT DICKENS



Pen Pictures from Contemporary Sources

XXV.—The First Meeting with Dickens

From "Recollections of Writers"

By Charles and Mary Cowden Clarke

IT was at a party at the Tagart's house that we were introduced by Leigh Hunt to Charles Dickens; when an additional light and delight seemed brought into our life. He had been so long known to us in our own home as "Dear Dickens" or "Darling Dickens," as we eagerly read, month after month, the moment they came out, the successive numbers of his gloriously original and heart-stirring productions, that to be presented to "Mr. Charles Dickens" and to hear him spoken of as "Mr. Dickens," seemed quite strange. That very evening —immediately—we felt at home and at ease with him. Genial, bright, lively-spirited, pleasant-toned, he entered into conversation with a grace and charm that made it feel perfectly natural to be chatting and laughing, as if we had known each other from childhood. So hearty was his enjoyment of what we were talking of that it caught the attention of our hostess, and she came up to enquire, what it could be that amused Mr. Dickens so much. It was no other than the successive pictures that had then lately appeared in "Punch" of Mr. Punch himself; two, in particular, we recollect made Dickens laugh, as we recalled them, until the tears glistened in his eyes with a keen sense of the fun and ridiculous absurdity in the attitudes. They were Mr. Punch, as Caius Movius, seated amid the ruins of Carthage, and Mr. Punch swimming in the sea near to a bathing machine. Charles Dickens had that acute perception of the comic side of things, which causes irrepressible brimming of the eyes; and what eyes his were! Large, dark-blue, exquisitively shaped, fringed with magnificently

long and thick lashes—they now swam in liquid limpid suffusion, when tears started into them from a sense of humour or a sense of pathos, and now darted quick flashes of fire when some generous indignation at injustice, or some high-wrought feeling of admiration at magnaminity, or some sudden emotion of interest and excitement, touched him. Swift-glancing, appreciative, rapidly observant, truly superb orbits they were, worthy of the other features in his manly, handsome face. The mouth was singularly mobile, full-lipped, well-shaped and expressive; sensitive, nay, restless, in its susceptibility to impressions that swayed him, or sentiment that moved him. He, who saw into apparently slightest trifles that were fraught to his perception with deepest significance: he, who beheld human nature with insight almost superhuman, and who revered good and abhorred evil with intensity, showed instantaneously by his expressive countenance the kind of idea that possessed him. This made his conversation enthralling, his acting first rate, and his reading, superlative.

All three it has been our good-luck to enjoy completely; and that we have had this enjoyment, will last us as a source of blest consciousness so long as we live.

XXVI.—Hans Andersen on his Visit

From a letter to the Grand-Duke of Weimar

9th August, 1857.

. . . . . At the end of May I left Denmark. Charles Dickens had already invited me several times to go to England. Ten years had now passed since I was there. . . . . This year Dickens's invitation was still more cordial and pressing. He had just bought a pretty house in the country, in North Kent, he wrote, where we could spend weeks together, and he had also just finished his latest work, *Little Dorrit*. I travelled to England, and was received there with great warmth and sincerity, and remained five weeks in the home of the author and friend . . . . . Dickens is forty-five years old, cheerful, amiable, noble and good. However highly I may place him as an author, I must prize him just as highly as an actor in tragedy as well as in comedy. Your Royal Highness will have read recently in the papers of the private performance he gave before the Queen. The whole Royal family and the King of the Belgians were there. Beyond these there were scarcely more than forty people whom Dickens had invited by permission of the Queen, and I was one of them. The Duke of Somerset had sent his gardener to decorate all the passages magnificently with rare flowers. It was a beautiful sight.

I went several times to London with Dickens and stayed all night at his luxurious house and visited all the most interesting entertainments going on at the same time . . . . . After coming from such a home as Dickens's, Paris seems to me like a bee-hive without honey.

MRS. MICAWBER INTERVENES

It is clear that a family of six, not including a domestic, cannot live upon air.

* * * * *

Now I am convinced, myself, and this I have pointed out to Mr. Micawber several times of late, that things cannot be expected to turn up of themselves. We must, in a measure, assist to turn them up. I may be wrong, but I have formed that opinion.

* * * * *

I speak as a female, necessarily; but I have always been of opinion that Mr. Micawber possesses what I have heard my papa call, when I lived at home, the judicial mind; and I hope Mr. Micawber is now entering on a field where that mind will develop itself, and take a commanding station.

* * * * *

It may not surprise you to know that we are at present waiting for a remittance from London, to discharge our pecuniary obligations at this hotel. Until the arrival of that remittance I am cut off from my home (I allude to lodgings in Pentonville), from my boy and girl, and from my twins.

* * * * *

When I lived at home with my papa and mama, my papa was in the habit of saying, "Emma's form is fragile, but her grasp of a subject is inferior to none." That my papa was too partial, I well know; but that he was an observer of character in some degree, my duty and my reason equally forbid me to doubt.

* * * * *

As to originating a banking-business, I may know that there are members of my family who, if they chose to place their money in Mr. Micawber's hands, might found an establishment of that description. But if they do *not* choose to place their money in Mr. Micawber's hands —which they don't—what is the use of that? Again I contend that we are no farther advanced than we were before.

* * * * *

My feelings as a wife and mother require relief; and as I do not wish to consult my family (already obnoxious to the feelings of Mr. Micawber), I know no one of whom I can better ask advice than my friend and former lodger.

* * * * *

I feel that the time is arrived when Mr. Micawber should exert himself and—I will add—assert himself, and it appears to me that these are the means. I am aware that I am merely a female, and that a masculine judgment is usually considered more competent to the discussion of such questions; still I must not forget that.

* * * * *

Between myself and Mr. Micawber (whom I will never desert) there has always been preserved a spirit of mutual confidence. Mr. Micawber may have occasionally given a bill without consulting me, or he may have misled me as to the period when that obligation would become due. This has actually happened. But, in general, Mr. Micawber has had no secrets from the bosom of affection—I allude to his wife—and has invariably, on our retirement to rest, recalled the events of the day.

IN DEFENCE OF MRS. NICKLEBY

By MARY L. PENDERED

I.

THE first general impression one has of Mrs. Nickleby is that she is incredibly silly, absurdly vain, rather selfish, and a terrible bore. That Dickens intended her to be funny there can be no doubt, and funny she certainly is. The reader must lack any sense of humour who does not immediately recognise her as drawn in the true spirit of comedy, one of the author's most successful comic characters. She has the mirth-provoking quality of the person who, having no sense of the ridiculous, becomes unconsciously so. But, after granting that she is absurd and mirth-provoking, I am prepared to maintain that Mrs. Nickleby was, nevertheless, a charming, natural woman, with qualities of heart and mind by no means to be despised.

In painting her, Dickens has, perhaps, laid on a little more colour than he has done on many of his people, but I have met women like Mrs. Nickleby, and so have you ; and they have not been objectionable women, though sometimes a little tiresome. We have called them nice, if rather silly, and have even been fond of them.

In the first place, Mrs. Nickleby was a kind and amiable woman, a good mother and not in the least selfish. She was probably an excellent wife to a rather indolent and incapable husband. Had she been really vain and self-centred her children would not have been so devoted to her as they undoubtedly were. There is not one indication in the whole book that Nicholas and Kate did not love her very dearly. And can anyone say that she neglected her motherly duties, or brought them up badly ? The fact that they bore patiently her long and tedious speeches shows definitely that they not only loved but respected her.

We see the careful, anxious mother in Mrs. Nickleby when we read of her going every evening to a certain street corner near Kate's place

of business to meet and walk home with her young daughter. In her day, of course, young ladies were not permitted to walk the streets alone, and we may be sure it was a source of anxiety to the gentle widow to think of her pretty child having to do so. She could not, probably, always accompany or fetch Kate, but she did her best by meeting her and cooling, as Dickens says, "not her heels alone but her limbs generally" at the corner of a street. I do not suppose that a delicately-minded female of her time liked walking in London streets alone, and I conceive she must have shrunk from doing so. But she was a loving, conscientious mother, and felt it to be a duty.

How she adored her two handsome children! That adoration is continually breaking out, and the intense pride she took in them. Here is a sample from the street scene in which she is introduced to Miss Knag, who tells her she has taken a fancy to Kate.

"I am delighted to hear it," said Mrs. Nickleby, "though it is nothing new to me that even strangers should like Kate. . . . She was always clever, from a baby. I recollect, when she was only two years and a half old, that a gentleman who used to visit at our house—Mr. Watkins, you know, Kate, my dear, that your poor papa went bail for, who afterwards ran away to the United States and sent us a pair of snowshoes, with such an affectionate letter it made your poor dear father cry for a week. You remember the letter? In which he said he was very sorry he couldn't repay the fifty pounds just then, because his capital was all out at interest and he was very busy making his fortune, but he didn't forget that you were his god-daughter, and he should take it very unkind if we didn't buy you a silver coral and put it down to his old account. Dear me, yes, my dear, how stupid you are! And spoke so affectionately of the old port wine that he used to drink a bottle and a half of every time he came. You must remember, Kate?"

"Yes, yes, mamma; what of him?"

"Why, that Mr. Watkins, my dear," said Mrs. Nickleby slowly, as if she were making a tremendous effort to recollect something of paramount importance, "that Mr. Watkins—he wasn't any relation, Miss Knag will understand, to the Watkins who kept the Old Boar in the village: by-the-by, I don't remember whether it was the Old Boar or the George the Third, but it was one of the two, I know, and it's much the same—that Mr. Watkins said, when you were only two years and a half old, that you were one of the most astonishing children he ever saw. He did indeed, Miss Knag, and he wasn't at all fond of children and couldn't have had the slightest motive for doing it. I know it was he who said so, because I recollect, as well as if it was yesterday, his borrowing twenty pounds of her poor dear papa the very moment afterwards."

Here we see clearly Mrs. Nickleby's quality as a mother. But we see more than that; the innocent gullibility of the woman. And this is a quality which, although dangerous, has a certain beauty of its own. The simple, confiding spirit is ever without guile. It has been said that the liar's punishment is that he can believe nobody,

and it is equally true that he who wishes to deceive and injure others is always suspicious and distrustful. I would submit, therefore, that Mrs. Nickleby had the candid, child-like nature which "thinketh no evil" and believes implicitly in everyone and everything apparent on the surface.

She is immediately taken in by Sir Mulberry Hawk and Lord Verisopht when their flattery takes the form of praising Kate, and pours out her motherly pride to this sophisticated and cynical pair, as she did to Miss Knag.

II.

The same artless innocence is shown when the demented gentleman wooed her with vegetable marrows and cucumbers over the garden wall. His courtship did not strike her as ridiculous, because, as we have noted, she had no sense of the ridiculous, and she believed his ardent protestations primarily because she believed everybody. I say 'primarily,' for, of course, there was another reason, to be considered presently. She thought the gentleman rather odd, but he *said* he was in love with her and so he must be in love with her. She was no more inclined to question his veracity than she was to question his sanity. One of the most delightful passages about her in the book is her conversation with Nicholas on that night when she took her nightcap from between the leaves of a large Prayer Book and confided her love affair to him. At first she was a trifle irritated with his obtuseness. "That was always the way with your dear papa—just his way, always wandering, never able to fix his thoughts on any one subject for two minutes together"—but presently she makes him see what she is after and plunges into her subject, the gentleman next door.

"There can be no doubt that he *is* a gentleman, and has the manners and the appearance of a gentleman, although he does wear smalls and grey worsted stockings. That may be eccentricity, or he may be proud of his legs. I don't see why he shouldn't be. The Prince Regent was proud of his legs, and so was Daniel Lambert, who was also a fat man."

Nicholas listens to all this and asks if she is sure there is no mistake on her part.

"Mistake!" cried Mrs. Nickleby. "Lord, Nicholas, my dear, do you suppose I don't know when a man's in earnest? . . . Every time I go to the window he kisses one hand and lays the other upon his heart—of course, it's very foolish of him to do so, and I daresay you'll say it's very wrong, but he does it very respectfully, and very tenderly, extremely tenderly. So far, he deserves the greatest credit; there can be no doubt about that . . . And last evening he called gently over the wall, as I was walking in the garden, and proposed marriage, and an elopement."

It is impossible for a nice young man to tell his mother she is a deluded fool—or it was in those days, when the relation between parent and child differed from that of to-day. Nicholas could only suggest

that she should do what her own good sense and respect for his father's memory would prompt. He could not, however, refrain from calling her admirer "an absurd old idiot," which rankled in his mother's mind after he had left her. Standing before her looking-glass she communed with herself indignantly.

"As to its being preposterous and doting and ridiculous, I don't see that at all. It is hopeless on his part, certainly, but why he should be an absurd old idiot I confess I don't see. He is not supposed to know it's hopeless. Poor fellow ! He is to be pitied, *I* think."

We are all prone to believe what we wish to believe, and, of course, Mrs. Nickleby's belief in the sincerity and sanity of the gentleman next-door was largely based on her desire to do so. Why not ? Was it an unnatural desire ? Does not every woman wish to be loved ? And Mrs. Nickleby was not an old woman. We may safely assume her to have been in the forties ; older then than now, when the woman of forty to fifty dances, plays golf, flies in the air, and does most things that a man of the same age does. She was quite naturally pleased to have attracted a lover, and who shall blame her ?

It is my opinion that Mrs. Nickleby was not only a pretty, but a rather spoilt woman, petted first by her husband and then by her children. It was, therefore, highly natural that she should welcome the advances of a lover, even such an equivocal lover as the gentleman next door. His attentions brought back her youth and faith in her own charms. She was flattered, and is there a man or woman who is proof against flattery ? If so, I've never met one. Her sense of the absurd was weak ; her innocent vanity was strong, and she persuaded herself to believe what she wished to believe—like the rest of us ! Dickens sums up the matter in his own genial way !

"To do Mrs. Nickleby justice, her attachment to her children would have prevented her seriously contemplating a second marriage, even if she had so far conquered her recollections of her late husband as to have any strong inclinations that way. But although there was no evil and little real selfishness in Mrs. Nickleby's heart, she had a weak head and a vain one ; and there was something so flattering in being sought (and vainly sought) in marriage at this time of day, that she could not dismiss the passion of the unknown gentleman quite so summarily or lightly as Nicholas appeared to deem becoming."

Thus the author himself shows plainly that he is no adverse critic of this gentle, innocent lady. In his day a weak head in a woman offered no drawback to her genuine charm. It was considerably more admired in her sex than a strong head ! And I cannot think that Mrs. Nickleby was an excessively vain woman. We never find her boasting of her good looks, or the fact that she had brought up her children well, or any of the claims that a vain, conceited woman might be expected to air. She was satisfied with herself, as a woman might well be who has had an adoring husband and children, and who knows herself to be good-looking and attractive ; but to be complacent is not necessarily to be vain.

The behaviour of the gentleman next-door was, no doubt, soothing

to the quite natural womanly vanity of the widow lady and gave her a thrill of imagination. She was able, through it, to regard herself as the heroine of a pathetic love story, in which unrequited affection played an interesting part ; and I am sure that she enjoyed it thoroughly.

One can only feel sorry when the cruel denouement spoils her dream-story ; when the mad gentleman turns his back on her and addresses himself to Miss La Creevy. His sudden repudiation is so overwhelming.

" Cat ! " repeated the old gentleman. " Puss, Kit, Grimalkin, Tabby, Brindle—Whooh ! "

No wonder the dear lady fainted. And we are very glad to see how her revolted pride asserts itself when she comes to.

" I shall never forgive myself, Kate, never ! That unhappy gentleman has lost his senses and I am the unhappy cause."

It is good to think, at least, that she was never disillusioned upon this point.

III.

All the evidence we can gather with regard to Mrs. Nickleby thus seems to prove conclusively that she possessed the sweet, child-like nature which never grows sour and is very easily imposed upon. Like a child she trusted everybody and expected everybody to love her. Like a child she possessed the celestial gift of imagination. I do not know if anyone has ever before remarked upon Mrs. Nickleby's imaginative faculty, and it has struck me very forcibly in analysing her character. Her credulity is based upon a lively fancy ; the quick, unspoilt fancy of a child. Take the child's acceptance of the delicious Father Christmas myth. I have known one to weep bitterly on learning that Father Christmas was " only mother." Can one imagine a more pitiful disillusion ? More than that suffered by Mrs. Nickleby when the gentleman next door said " Whosh ! " to her ; because she could build up a fresh image in her mind —of herself as the cause of his aberration. Whereas the child realises that her exquisite vision of a mysterious visitant is gone for ever.

For proof of Mrs. Nickleby's creative imagination one can read passage after passage in her speeches. When she tells Kate that her suitors had numbered at least a dozen, " not including your dear papa, or a young gentleman who used to go, at that time,

to the same dancing school, and who would send gold watches and bracelets to our house in gilt-edged paper," we may reasonably suppose she drew upon her mental supplies. The gold watches in gilt-edged paper of the young gentleman (who was subsequently going to be hung before he choked himself) smacks too obviously of fiction to be accepted as fact. But there are further instances, even more convincing, of the rate at which her vivid fancy travelled. It was that vivid fancy, indeed, which led her through such labyrinths of talk and confused her listeners. They could not follow her flights of imagination from one subject to another.

Extremely imaginative persons are often afflicted by this weakness of aim. I would never for a moment claim that Mrs. Nickleby knew what she wanted. Her case was like that of Rossetti when he wrote :

> " And I will lead my shadow o'er the grass
> Nor know, for longing, that which I would do."

She had the vague, indeterminate mind of the poet, ever caught by vague phantoms of its own creation, mixed up with vagrant memories of past happenings. Take, for instance, her speech when she is asked by her son to invite Mr. and Mrs. Browdie to tea. (I would have you note, by the way, that her kindness of heart and desire to oblige her children never fails ; witness her acceptance of poor Smike as a guest, her gentleness and pity for him.) After stating that she must first call on Mrs. Browdie, as a matter of strict etiquette, she embroiders her statement after her usual fashion.

" The fact is, my dear," she says, " that it is necessary there should be a sort of condescension on my part, and that I should show this young person that I am willing to take notice of her."

Thereupon, she floats off on the wings of combined fancy and memory :

" There's a very respectable young man . . . who is conductor of one of the omnibuses that go by here and who wears a glazed hat—he has a wart upon his nose, Kate, you know, exactly like a gentleman's servant."

" Have all gentlemen's servants warts on their noses, mother ? " asked Nicholas. Entirely unaware that he is " pulling her leg," as we say, his mother simply rebukes him for foolishness.

" Nicholas, my dear, how very absurd you are ! Of course I mean that his glazed hat looks like a gentleman's servant, and not the wart upon his nose—though even that is not so ridiculous as it may seem to you, for we had a foot boy once who had not only a wart, but a wen also, and a very large wen too, and he demanded to have his wages raised in consequence, because he found it became very expensive. Let me see, what was I—oh yes, I know."

But more convincing proofs of Mrs. Nickleby's imaginative gift may be found in other chapters ; notably in those where it soars into glorious visions of the future awaiting her young son and daughter. Here is one :

"I've been thinking all day," she says to Kate, on their walk home one evening, "what a delightful thing it would be for Madame Mantalini to take you into partnership—such a likely thing too, you know. Why, your poor dear papa's cousin's sister-in-law—a Miss Browndock—was taken into partnership by a lady that kept a school at Hammersmith and made her fortune in no time at all. I forget, by the by, whether that Miss Browndock was the same lady that got the £10,000 in the lottery, but I think she was; indeed, now I come to think of it, I am sure she was. 'Mantalini and Nickleby," how

See page 205

well it would sound!—and if Nicholas had any good fortune, you might have Dr. Nickleby, the headmaster of Westminster School, living in the same street."

And again, when that rosy vision has faded and Mrs. Nickleby had signified her disapproval of the millinery business from which she had foreseen such brilliant prospects:

"Isn't it obvious, my dear, that of all occupations in this world for a young lady situated as you are, that of companion to an amiable lady is the very thing for which your education and manners and personal appearance and everything else exactly qualify you. Did you never hear your poor dear papa speak of the young lady who was the daughter of the old lady who boarded in the same house that

he boarded in once, when he was a bachelor—what was her name again ? I know it began with a B and ended with a g, but whether it was Waters or—oh no, it couldn't have been that, either ; but the young lady went as companion to a married lady who died soon afterwards, and then she married the husband and had one of the finest little boys that the medical man had ever seen—all within eighteen months."

We have the testimony of Kate to her mother's joys of imagination. " How can I undeceive her," she says to her Uncle, " when she is so happy in these little delusions, which are the only happiness she has ? "

Mrs. Nickleby stands as a bright, simple, kindly, affectionate and lovable woman ; a good, unselfish mother, centred in her children, and no fool really, in spite of her apparent foolishness. With education and training she might have been a poet or a novelist—who knows ? She had certainly sufficient imagination and could express herself in fluent English. But whatever her virtues and whatever her faults, she has undoubtedly added to the gaiety of nations. I think we are all grateful to Dickens for Mrs. Nickleby.

DICKENS AS AN AID TO TRADE

Lyons' Dickens Assortment of Chocolates is now such an established favourite that we must include a reproduction of the box (which in the original is beautifully coloured) as a further record of the great use the name and fame of Dickens have been to traders.

MR. SAPSEA THE MURDERER OF EDWIN DROOD!

[The following MS recently reached the office of *The Dickensian*, and while accepting no responsibility for the views expressed therein, the Editor deems that it may be of interest as illustrating the perils to which Drood enthusiasts may expose themselves and their belongings and the ultimate destiny that may await them.]

THREE years ago I sold my business and turned my wife and family out of doors with an allowance. Thus I was able to devote myself in peace to an uninterrupted investigation of the Drood Mystery with some hope of being able to solve it. I purchased every book and pamphlet on the subject that had been published, together with thirty volumes of *The Dickensian*, although for forty years I had studied the problem closely. I read everything. I made notes and extracts which, printed in full, would occupy a volume of the "Encyclopœdia Britannica."

At last I have the satisfaction of announcing that the key lies in my hand. I have found it! Great as is my triumph, it is faintly tempered by the fact that I am writing from a Home of Rest. They are very good to me, however, and whenever freed from the restraint of my strait-waistcoat, I relieve the tedium by pursuing my researches and recording the result thus:

Edwin Drood did not, as a discarded title suggests, go into hiding. He was not kidnapped to sea in a drugged condition to return disguised as Mr. Tartar; neither was he his own uncle, nor was Mr. Jasper his own nephew as Miss Fitzgerald seems to have deduced.

Upon the unfortunate Jasper a mountain of suspicion has been piled. But that was the art of Dickens which concealed his art. Had he lived to complete the book, Jasper's pure and beautiful character would have been cleared and his name triumphantly re-established.

The dénouement is almost ridiculously simple when once you know it, yet it has taken me a lifetime to evolve, and here I am.

Not to maintain the suspense any longer, Thomas Sapsea, Mayor of Cloisterham, was the murderer of Edwin Drood.

This monster is one of the most subtly drawn characters in Dickens. For calculating villainy, for disgusting hypocrisy, he stands unique. Only the Master could have limned him upon his imperishable canvas.

Sapsea, a widower accustomed to be looked up to by a young wife with a feeble liver, loved Rosa Bud, whom, unknown to her, he frequently saw. See how delicately this is conveyed in Chapter 13. There we are told (the italics are mine) that "the hoarse High Street became musical with the cry, in various silvery voices, 'Good-bye, Rosebud dear!' and the effigy of Mr. Sapsea's father over *the opposite doorway* seemed to say to mankind: 'Gentlemen, favour me with your attention to this *charming little last lot* left behind, and bid with *a spirit worthy* of the occasion.'"

Ethelinda, the deceased "reverential wife" had been, as the monument declared, "a spirit capable of looking up to him"—*i.e.* worthy of

him—and here it is carefully suggested that he considered Rosa, who lived opposite, was also " a spirit worthy " [of him].

But Edwin Drood stood between Sapsea and his happiness. Monster that he was, he removed the young man and buried him in his wife's vault by a method I hope one day to describe.

It is a well-known trait in some murderers that they cannot resist haunting the scene of their crime, and that they have a perpetual urge to " dare " Fate by secretly, even exultingly, drawing attention to their victim in veiled fashion.

In Poe's tale of " The Black Cat," the murderer took his cane and boastfully struck the cellar wall in which the corpse of his wife was immured, thus arousing the yells of the cat accidentally bricked up with her, and placing the searchers on the track.

Jonas Chuzzlewit was " for ever showing and presenting the body of Montague Tigg, as it were, to every creature he saw. " Look here, do you know of this ? Is it found ? Do you suspect *me* ? " If he had been condemned to bear the body in his arms . . . it could not have been more constantly with him."

Sapsea laboured under this same dreadful urge. Knowing that the body of Edwin was concealed in his wife's vault, *he often takes an airing in the Cathedral Close.* He likes to see a stray face or two reading his inscription which he had boastfully exhibited to Mr. Datchery. He is convinced that a stranger coming away from it with a quick step is " with a blush retiring," as monumentally directed.

How did the wretched man preserve his secret ? He did it beneath the cloak of ecclesiasticism. Here again we have parallel cases in the gallery of Dickensian rogues.

Stiggins was a calculating hypocrite. He affected a clerical intonation and a semi-clerical dress. Chadband was a calculating hypocrite. He affected a clerical intonation and a semi-clerical dress, Pecksniff likewise.

Now consider Sapsea. He dresses " at " the Dean ; has been bowed to for the Dean by mistake ; has been taken for the Bishop. He intones in his auctioneer's pulpit to make himself more like what he takes to be the genuine ecclesiastical article, and ends a sale with the air of bestowing a benediction on the assembled brokers which leaves the Dean far behind. And " when he comes into the presence of the Dean, he is instantly stricken far more ecclesiastical than any Archbishop of York or Canterbury."

Precisely ; and why ? Because he was a scoundrel of blacker dye than Stiggins, or Chadband, or Pecksniff. They, at least, were not murderers. Few would trace any resemblance between them and an Archbishop. The greater the villainy, the greater the need for ecclesiastical disguise. Hence the arch-villain became even arch-episcopal in his pose.

To divert suspicion from himself, he fosters and feeds the suspicion unwittingly and not unnaturally directed towards Neville by Mr. Jasper, and consistently befriends that maligned chorister. When Neville is dragged before him as Mayor on Christmas morning, the wretch was expecting his own arrest by his own police.

And what happened then ? Sapsea " wandered into a denser maze of nonsense than even a Mayor might have been expected to disport himself in." That was but natural. He was dumbfounded ; his wits were all abroad when he realised his own amazing fortune at not being suspected and apprehended.

Who was Datchery ? To me that problem presents no difficulty. I answer boldly that Datchery was Mrs. Crisparkle, the Chinese shepherdess. Accustomed as she was to disappear from Cloisterham on an annual visit to her sister in London for " the rematching of the China ornaments," her prolonged absence from Minor Canon Corner would cause no remark. Her disguise would be an easy matter for Mrs. Tisher to arrange. Mrs. Tisher was " a deferential widow with a weak back, a chronic sigh, and a suppressed voice, who looked after the wardrobe of Miss Twinkleton's pupils . . . It was an article of faith that the departed Tisher was a hairdresser." Therefore, Mrs. Tisher would attend adequately to Mrs. Crisparkle's wardrobe and disguise as Datchery.

For the rest, Mrs. Crisparkle had white hair : so had Mr. Datchery. She was " exceedingly proud of her eyes being so clear that she could read writing without spectacles." Datchery wore no spectacles ; his eyes were clear and bright. She was unable to " argue very closely " ; Datchery had so confused a knowledge of events that Mr. Tope had to correct him in every detail of his summary of the facts.

But how to explain the implacable animosity of the Princess Puffer towards the innocent Jasper ? Dickens, as we all know, was fond of surprising relationships. We have but to think of Mr. Krook as being the brother of Mrs. Smallweed, Smike as the son of Ralph Nickleby for a dozen others to spring to the mind. Unknown to the lad himself, Deputy was a son of the Princess Puffer. Jasper's incoherent ravings in the opium den showed her that he hated the boy. " I shall shed the blood of that impish wretch," he had cried. She learned that he had hoisted him off his legs, and burst his braces, and nearly strangled him.

Burning with maternal wrath she followed Jasper to Cloisterham to take her revenge upon him on the scene of his cruelty. Concealed behind a Cathedral pillar, she regarded him, the assailant of her darling, with the closest attention. She hugged herself in her lean arms and shook both fists at the leader of the choir. And Deputy, peering sharp-eyed through the bars, stared astounded from the threatener to the threatened—*i.e.* from the dear lad's enemy to his unknown but loving old mother. What a happy, happy reunion is here foreshadowed ! How this would have brightened the gloom of the finished book.

But alas I must finish. The hour has struck, and my keeper approaches. These are the barest results of a life-long study of the most fascinating problem in literature. Later I hope to publish a large work upon it, giving my researches in detail, for to me alone has it been vouchsafed to elucidate the mystery that has intrigued the world for over sixty years.

A PICKWICK MENU

WHAT will you take for breakfast, sir ? . . . There's a very nice ham and a beautiful cold larded fowl. Shall I send 'em in, sir ?

* * * * *

The ham, from the German sausage shop round the corner.

* * * * *

Breakfast was ready laid in tempting display . . . and broiled ham, eggs, tea, coffee, and sundries began to disappear with a rapidity which at once bore testimony to the excellence of the fare and the appetites of its consumers.

* * * * *

Soles—ah !—capital fish—all come from London.

* * * * *

Tongue ! A wery good thing when it an't a woman's.

* * * * *

Wery good little dinner they can get ready in half an hour—pair of fowls, and a weal cutlet ; French beans ; taters, tart and tidiness.

* * * * *

Devilish good dinner—cold, but capital ; fowls and pies and all that sort of thing.

* * * * *

Broiled fowl and mushrooms—capital thing.

* * * * *

Half a leg of mutton, baked, with the potatoes under it, to save boiling.

* * * * *

To dinner they went with good digestion waiting on appetite, and health on both, and a waiter on all three.

* * * * *

Now, gen'l'men, " fall on " as the English said to the French when they fixed bagginets.

* * * * *

This way—this way—capital fun—lots of beer—hogshead ; rounds of beef—bullocks ; mustard—cart-loads ; glorious day—down with you—make yourself at home—glad to see you—very.

* * * * *

It's the seasoning as does it.

* * * * *

The cheese went a great way, for it was very strong.

* * * * *

And a very good notion of a lunch it is, take it all together.

* * * * *

Stop in the tea-room. Take your sixpenn'orth. They lay on hot water and call it tea.

* * * * *

A glass of wine in honour of this happy occasion.

* * * * *

Bottle stands—pass it round—way of the sun—through the button-hole—no heeltaps.

* * * * *

Glorious party—capital songs—old port—claret—good—very good—wine, ma'am—wine.

* * * * *

Let's—have—'nother—bottle.

THE GOSPEL OF *MARTIN CHUZZLEWIT*

By J. CUMING WALTERS, M.A., F.R.G.S.

EVERY Dickens reader has his favourite novel and is entitled to his choice. According to taste and temperament he may select such widely varying works as *The Old Curiosity Shop* or *A Tale of Two Cities*. Men of such high judgment as Ruskin and Shaw have put *Hard Times* in the highest rank, appealing to them, as it does, for its ethical and sociological purpose. But when we have duly allowed for individual preferences, and when we come to exercise impartial criticism from a strictly literary standpoint, we shall probably agree that the three novels in which Dickens displayed his utmost power were *David Copperfield*, *Bleak House*, and *Martin Chuzzlewit*. His many-sided genius was here brought into full play.

Martin Chuzzlewit provides one of the choicest and most attractive pictures of old English life in a quiet cathedral city and its environs. The atmosphere of early Victorian times has been caught to perfection. The small yet vital movements and actions of a little circle of human beings in a circumscribed local area are made to afford an interest which develops into positive excitement as the drama proceeds. There are incidental touches, also, of the rarest quality, such as the coach ride to Salisbury, the scenes in Mrs. Lupin's parlour, and Tom Pinch at the bookstall; these need to be read in detail, and upon them Dickens concentrated the peculiar art of description and suggestion of which he was master. We savour a special relish in all this portion of the work relating to the old England of a century ago, when there were country towns undisturbed, when life flowed calmly, and yet when, ever and anon, dramas were fashioned which culminated in soul-shaking crises.

The typical English scenes of tranquillity and charm are contrasted with American scenes of noise, scandal, turbulence, and chicanery. Here Dickens came upon entirely new ground. He had visited America and he gave his experiences with his customary candour and fearlessness. Whether he was tactful and expedient is not the question; I am content with the fact that he was honest. In his portrayal of American characteristics a special faculty seems to have come to his aid. Few

could have suspected the possibility of his mastery of the laconic and colloquial language, with all its novelty and quaintness, which the Americans employed, whether professional or business men or whether mountebanks and actors. Some of the raciest passages Dickens ever wrote are to be found in these American chapters. The ridiculous allegory, the abuse of hyperbole, the outrageous exaggeration, the intolerable affectation of certain American groups, are all brought out with exquisite skill; and I doubt not that the discerning and discriminating American laughs at them himself and is not ill-pleased to have them destroyed by ridicule.

Dickens's American chapters are amongst the most humorous, but, at the same time, the most caustic that he ever penned. They are a remorseless exposure of the hollowness and insincerity of social and business life in the New World, which, with all the faults he revealed, vaunted of its superiority and nursed its foolish prejudices. These were Dickens's pictures of selfishness in an environment where it ought not to have been found, in the land of Liberty, of boasted brotherhood, and of social equality—the Utopia founded by men who had fled from tyrrany and narrow caste, to found a Republic, a Commonwealth of noble ideals. But what was Dickens's experience? Human nature had got the better of pious declarations. He found rapacity and greed, scandal and falsehood, double-dealing and deceit, just as virulent in the land which sang "Hail Columbia" as in the London slums and the Salisbury byways; and he found these evils made worse by a pretentious attitude of superiority over the rest of mankind. Dickens rose in indignation and used the lash unsparingly. His ridicule was as remorseless as his denunciation. The corrupt estate agents, the corrupt pressmen, the corrupt merchants, all receive heavy blows; but the stings inflicted on the corrupt society men and women, the politicians, the mouthing orators, are not less severe.

It is often debated whether it was expedient for Dickens to give himself this task. He was the last man to think of expediency. His first thought was honesty. He lived the truth as he knew it and he needs no other justification. If he helped to let Americans see themselves as others saw them, if he tore the veil from dangerous charlatans, if he helped to exterminate the Scadders and suppress the Jefferson Bricks, and if he covered with shame the egregious and ignorant anti-Britons with their garrulous speeches and absurd misconceptions, then he did America great service for which she should be everlastingly grateful. It is unlikely that a man of integrity on either side of the Atlantic really resents Dickens's action in exposing cant, insincerity, and selfishness, whether displayed under the Union Jack or the Stars and Stripes. We in England are thankful for the warning against Pecksniff and Tigg; and they in America might be equally thankful for the warning against the betrayers who, in the words of Mark Tapley, are "so fond of liberty that they buy her and sell her; and they've such a passion for liberty that they can't help taking liberties with her." I regard Dickens's American chapters as one of his finest and

bravest crusades, a stroke for righteousness and regeneration, which adds lustre and honour to his name.

II.

In the Chuzzlewit drama there are many detached scenes and episodes on which it would be pleasant to dwell. Dickens seems to have been so overflowing with spirits while he wrote this volume, so fertile in fancy, so resourceful and even exuberant, that he was able to pack his work with luxuries. The story may halt, though we do not regret it, whilst he gives the details of Tigg's borrowings, or describes the characteristics of Old Chuzzlewit's relations, or gives us an intimate view of an American ceremony, or takes us behind the scenes of a pawnshop. We are well and profitably delayed with Tom Pinch's masterful condemnation of the purse-proud merchant who degraded his menial, Ruth Pinch, and then complained that his daughter did not respect her. We revel in the domestic life so felicitously revealed of Ruth and her brother, and feel the irresistible charm of the little housekeeper and manager. The most stupendous climax of a half-humorous sort which the story reaches is that concerning Pecksniff at a crucial moment, when, with his home full of difficulties and complications, with irreconcilable people suddenly meeting in his house, with his daughters in hysterics, and with a perfect chaos of embroilments, he placidly presents himself at the door in a gardener's costume and suavely pretends that all is well and that he is engaged in nothing more important than a little wholesome digging of the soil.

The Mrs. Todgers scenes, which pass and flash before us like a series of tableaux vivants, show Dickens in his most hilarious mood. The humour is all the better for its mock-solemnity. The fatuous commercials with their silly formalities and over-acted punctilios, are treated with a dignity which makes their absurdity but the more obvious. The eager little lodging-house keeper, keeping friends with all and understanding their foibles, is even made to serve a soothing moral purpose by Pecksniff, when he rises in righteous judgment against her bowing the knee to Mammon to retain patronage and favour. Through all the macap medley and merriment flits the impish figure of Bailey Junior, the precocious boy on whom Dickens lavished particular care, having him in reserve for further and more important use in the course of the drama's development. These episodes are long, but they are not wasted. They all folded into the material of the plot and made the literary fabric rich and substantial.

It is in this story, too, that Dickens showed for the first time his power in the art of secret detection. In *Bleak House* his Inspector Bucket is no more than a shrewd and clever tracker-down and not beyond blundering. But in *Martin Chuzzlewit* there is a Nadgett, who works by stealth and strikes at last unerringly.

But if there be humour, full and overflowing, what are we to say of the pathos ? Is there any spectacle more touching than the downfall of Mercy Pecksniff—" the merry one "—under the brutishness of her husband Jonas ? And is there any villain so unredeemed and unredeemable as Jonas himself, the monstrous offspring of all the evils

and vices that arise from selfishness? Dickens never wrote with more desperate force, with more intensity, than when he dealt with Jonas as a murderer—examining his mind in advance, making known his fears, telling of the secret deed and of the horror that overcame the fugitive criminal, and the terrible inexorable climax—it is all a masterpiece of soul-searching analysis.

Dickens was probably led to his theme by discerning that selfishness is a root-disease, and that with its many and varied attendant evils it is the curse of the age. Like jealousy it is closely associated with animal instincts, and degrades human nature, dragging it down to the very level of the beasts. It is the foe of fairness and goodwill, it incites enmity, it promotes feud. Selfishness maintains the strife between man and man, class and class, without bringing about progress, for progress is only possible when there is a worthy goal to reach. In a better age, and with finer spiritual conceptions, man will rise from this low condition, and instead of making selfish ends his sole purpose, will aim at the common good. That is the moral enforced in *Martin Chuzzlewit*. Dickens was looking forward to the time when each would be for all and all for each and when a Brotherhood of Man would become possible. There is no hope for that while self prevails and prevents a union of hearts.

"The curse of our house" said old Martin Chuzzlewit in that final scene, when everyone had learnt his lesson, "the curse of our house has been the love of self." He might have added that while self had proved itself so emphatically to be the curse, unselfishness was proved none the less forcibly in the end to be a blessing. Wealth brings no happiness unless shared; there is no friendship without mutual faith; there is no honour without purity of soul and sincerity of purpose. Those are the lessons Dickens enforced in his story.

III.

There is one other point seldom, if ever, mentioned, which I think ought not only to be considered, but emphasised. It is the part that music plays in this volume. Dickens was a music-lover, brought up in a musical family and not without musical accomplishments of his own. He was greatly affected by music, and certain composers—Gounod in particular—could so act upon his sensitive spirit that he was reduced to passionate fits of weeping as he listened to their strains. We must not, therefore, omit music from our consideration when we come to *Martin Chuzzlewit*, through which the pealing of Tom Pinch's organ is heard from first to last. The drama opens with his chords; and the great crisis of his life is reached as he is touching the notes, while learning with horror and amaze of Pecksniff's perfidy. At that awful crisis in Tom Pinch's fate when he discovers what the miscreant Pecksniff is, and all his dreams are shattered, all his ideals crushed to earth, what does he do? He ascends the organ loft and touches the keys. But the music they give accords with the tumult in his sorrowing soul "their minstrelsy was changed, their music gone, and sounding one long, melancholy chord, Tom drooped his head upon his hands and gave it up as hopeless." The finale takes place to the

The Dickensian Society refuses the gift of a statuette of Little Nell, by a modern sculptor

Reproduced from "Punch" by kind permission of the Proprietors

accompaniment of the melodies which bring back memories of the past and suggest dreams of the future.

We could almost compare *Martin Chuzzlewit* to a symphony in words, its *motif* heard throughout, repeated and accentuated at intervals, varied, yet always clear, and at the end caught up into one glorious and triumphant melody of joy, and hope, and victory.

The concluding passages of *Martin Chuzzlewit* are sometimes held to be too sentimental and to verge on extravagance. But that is not just criticism. They are exactly suitable as a finish for the case presented. It is not until a man is purged of self that he is fit for the higher life, and that is what Dickens meant to convey when he wrote: "Touch the notes lightly, Tom; . . . thou passeth gently to another measure; . . . thou glidest now into a graver air," as the spirits of the beloved ones rise before him. But when Ruth comes and sits by his side: "From the Present and the Past, with which she is so tenderly entwined in all thy thoughts, thy strain soars onward to the Future. As it resounds within thee and without, the noble music, rolling round ye both, shuts out the grosser prospect of an earthly parting, and uplifts ye both to Heaven!" That is the high note on which the symphony closes, passing into the rarefied air of a spiritual existence which only holiness and truth can attain.

And it is well that the laws of music should be followed when all discords are merged in harmony, the varying chords united in one grand diapason, and from the vibrating strings a celestial melody drawn forth. So we leave Tom Pinch at his organ and with his visions of all that is beautiful and peaceful about him, and the melody swells out triumphantly, for it is the song of those that are pure in heart and are uplifted towards divinity.

"GREAT LIVES" No. 11. DICKENS

The new series of "Great Lives" which Messrs. Duckworth are issuing at two shillings, are short biographies of from twenty-five to thirty thousand words for general reading. To Mr. Bernard Darwin has been entrusted the volume on Dickens. In this little book he gives a rapid survey of the life of our author, interspersed with many shafts of criticism, and interesting remarks as to his own preferences, which it is always a pleasure to read. For the first time in a Dickens biography much of the new information obtainable from the recently published correspondence with Thomas Beard has been incorporated to great advantage, except in the case of the repetition of Forster's error regarding Dickens's connection with the "True Sun," and the strike among the reporters. We must point out, too, that Dr. Frank Beard went post haste to Preston and not to Blackpool, as Mr. Darwin asserts, at the time the Readings were cancelled. Mr. Darwin is also in error in stating that the first of the *Sketches by Boz* appeared in "The Evening Chronicle" in 1835.

Whilst thanking Mr. Darwin for this deliciously virile account of Dickens's eventful life, we cannot help expressing a wish that he had reserved himself for a more full and complete study of England's best-beloved author. He has the happy knack of showing Dickens in a very human way, and his criticisms are always sane and worth reading.

THE ORIGINAL PLATES IN *NICHOLAS NICKLEBY*

BIBLIOGRAPHERS have paid little attention to Phiz's plates in *Nicholas Nickleby*. The plates of *The Pickwick Papers* are supremely interesting on account of the changes of artists and the vicissitudes of fortune in producing both text and accompanying plates. The keenness of the hunter of first issues has led to detailed discussion of the priority of certain plates over others. In the later great novels the presence of the "dark" plates, which compelled re-etching, and which were in some cases lithographed, has led to similar investigation of priority of issue over issue. Phiz's plates in *Nicholas Nickleby* were interrupted by only one stroke of ill luck. We are all familiar with the publisher's announcement in Part XIV, "that in consequence of the sudden indisposition of the Artist, the Plates which should have accompanied this Number are unavoidably postponed till next Month, when Four will be given." Apart from this incident production of text and plates was uneventful. Phiz's plates in this novel have usually been dismissed as depressingly ugly and extravagant caricatures, the last plate, "The Children at their Cousin's Grave," being the only one of artistic merit. The bibliographers seem to be equally cursory. Eckel, in the new edition of his book, "The First Editions of Charles Dickens," makes three points only about the plates of *Nickleby*. The first four plates should bear the publishers' imprint. The caption of the plate facing p. 457 should be the so-called "long" one, not agreeing with the caption in the table of contents, and the caption of the plate facing p. 248 should be shorter than that cited in the list of plates.

Nevertheless the plates of this book are of interest both from the point of view of the artist and lover of literature and from that of the bibliophile and first-issue hunter. *Nicholas Nickleby* was the first great novel begun in an atmosphere of assured success. To many lovers of Dickens the great Dickens is the early Dickens, the youth in the first full flood of creative power, unimpressed by criticism, and not inclined to take a road which was not his own. *Pickwick* is great in the same way that "Huckleberry Finn" and the "Odyssey" are great. *Nickleby* delights us in just the same way, not by the impression it gives of solid achievement, but by that of infinite creative exuberance. *David Copperfield* is a tremendous completed whole from which one retires satisfied. *Nickleby* is still like *Pickwick*, a fragment the genie offered us from his infinite store.

The plates carry out this impression of creative exuberance. Further they express the essential Dickens philosophy that human life is in general, in spite of its horrors and cruelties, in public a jolly hubbub and in private extremely cosy. They are forcible and full of life and movement and amusing detail.

Examination of the plates in the monthly parts shows that in some cases Phiz etched as many as four different plates, owing, no doubt, to

the enormous circulation. Including two portraits there were apparently one hundred and twenty-six varieties of the forty plates. With so many variations it does not seem possible to establish much as to the priority of printing of one variation over others. All variations are in comparatively minute and insignificant details. The mistake "visiter" for "sister" on page 123 does not help. Despite Dickens's detecting this error in the proof and calling the proof-reader's attention to it in the well-known letter to Mr. Hicks, copies were printed with the error. Yet such copies show variations in the plates accompanying them. The first copies printed of parts I and II bear the publishers' imprint no doubt. But they may be each one of two. The first-issue hunter is told that the caption on his plate facing p. 457 should be the long one, "Nicholas makes his first visit to the lodgings of Mr. Bray," not as in the list of illustrations, which omits the words "the lodgings of." As a matter of fact, a short title on the plate is not very common, and therefore presumably very late, since it agrees with the list of illustrations first given in the last part. The short caption on the plate facing p. 248, "Nicholas instructs Smike the art of acting," is not common, so that it was presumably soon altered to that of the list of illustrations. In the earlier plate there is a tankard on the table, a sword and buckler on the floor in front, instead of a hat and plume, and the covering of the chair is plain instead of figured. With regard to the priority of the states of the plate facing p. 373, at least four plates were etched for inclusion in the monthly parts. In the list of illustrations the caption reads, "A Sudden Recognition, Unexpected On Both Sides." One state of the plate reads, "A sudden recognition unexpected on both sides." Two other variants read, "A sudden recognition ; unexpected on both sides," without any spacing between the two words between which the semi-colon is inserted. (The captions are, of course, engraved in a cursive hand, and are not in type.) A fourth variant gives the semi-colon, but with a proper gap between the two words so separated. So far as I can discover no caption agrees with the list of illustrations. The presumption would seem to be, therefore, that the first state of the plate is that without the punctuation mark, and the last state that with mark of punctuation and proper interval between the words so separated. Yet the former is plainly marked 2 in the body of the plate! In most cases differences of Phiz's signature, or its absence, accompany differences of detail in the plates.

Sometimes Phiz wrote his signature in a cursive hand, sometimes in capitals ; sometimes he forgot to reverse his signature on the engraved plate. Of the plate facing p. 373 that state which I suggest as the earliest is probably the best picture. Smike's terror and the alarm of the grim old roast-chestnut woman, leaning against the lamp-post to which Smike clings, are very well represented. The artificial fish himself hanging from the rod over the fishing-tackle shop shows agitation in the line from which he is suspended. In the other variants the old woman is much less grim and complacently smokes her pipe.

E. H. Strange.

THE WORK OF BALL HUGHES

WHEN our Secretary, Mr. A. W. Edwards, was in Boston he was much struck with the statue of Little Nell in the Athenæum there. Unfortunately, nobody appeared to have much information respecting its history, so Mrs. Otis Smith instituted enquiries and Miss Anne J. Pehrson, of the Art Department of the Boston Athenæum, wrote as follows :—

"We have little information to give about our statue of 'Little Nell,' by Ball Hughes. It has been in the Athenæum since 1852, but how long before that it was modelled we do not know. It would have to be after 1842, the year when *The Old Curiosity Shop* was first published. I think it is likely that it was quite recently finished when it was first exhibited at the Athenæum, but I cannot prove it. The statue used to go by a longer title, 'Little Nell sitting in the churchyard ;' I suppose the incident is too familiar to need a longer description. The figure is almost life size. Nell is sitting on a chair placed on a flat tombstone, part of the inscription of which is legible. Her right hand rests on the book in her lap, her left arm is bent at the elbow, which rests on her knee. The left hand touches her cheek lightly and the expression on her face is pensive and a little melancholy. Her left foot rests on a small cushioned footstool. The statue is of plaster and was never carved in marble ; I can find no trace of another cast, but there may be one.

" There seems to be very little written about Hughes, and I can find no list of his works. He was born in England in 1806, received the medal of the Royal Academy there, came to America in 1829, and settled in Dorchester after first working in New York for a time. He died here in 1868. His chief claim to fame is that he modelled the first statue cast in bronze in America, a full length of Dr. Bowditch, in 1847. In 1845 he carved a marble statue of Alexander Hamilton, said to be the first marble statue carved in this country. He modelled a group statue of ' My Uncle Toby and the Widow Wadman,' a scene from Sterne's ' Tristram Shandy,' which was exhibited at the Athenæum from 1839 to 1861."

Mrs. Otis Smith's further enquiries elicited from a grandson of Ball Hughes, that a statue of Oliver Twist in marble was made for the Duke of Devonshire and was in Chatsworth.

This statement has been submitted to Mr. Francis Thompson, Librarian at Chatsworth, who replied :

" I am afraid I have never heard of Ball Hughes nor can I find any record of any statue by him having ever been at Chatsworth. His name is not mentioned in the special volume which the sixth Duke reserved for his purchases of contemporary sculpture ; but this does not go beyond 1845, and it seems quite probable that if he began to be interested in Dickens after that date he may have commissioned Hughes to make such a statue and it may have been given away after the Duke's death. Quite a considerable part of the collection has been dissipated from time to time among the different members of the Duke's family."

Both the " Little Nell " and " Oliver Twist " statues were exhibited at " The Great Exhibition " of 1851, and in relation to " Oliver Twist " the following magazine notice at the time has been supplied by Mr. W. Miller.

" Mr. Hughes, of Boston, United States, is, we understand, the sculptor from whose chisel has proceeded this happy delineation of what is considered by many of us as one of the novelist's finest creations. The moment chosen by the artist is that in which the poor orphan, having been dropped by the burglar Sikes in his hurried escape, has made his way back again to Mr. Maylie's door. Wounded, fatigued, and wretched, the miserable lad has set himself down, apparently uncaring whether he lives or dies. Poverty, privation, and the dark scenes in which he has been made to take an unwilling part, have almost dried up the well-spring of Hope within his breast, and he sits, the picture of despair and hard reality."

We are pleased to be able to give pictures of these two statues and, knowing where " Little Nell " is, we shall not rest contented till we have traced the present whereabouts of " Oliver Twist."

In a later communication Mr. Thompson writes that he has again searched his records, and can find no allusion whatever to a statue by Ball Hughes, and is confident that it is not now in the possession of the Duke of Devonshire.

SURTEES AND THE MODERN MIND

IN an able and interesting book* many readers will find the last chapter the most interesting of all. Therein Mr. Watson discusses "Surtees and the Modern Mind." He asks why Surtees has persisted, and, of course, he finds that a principal reason is that the author of "Handley Cross" was a creator of character, humour being his chief

See opposite page

material. That is the ultimate explanation of Dickens's persistence, and references to the author of *Pickwick* are inevitable. Mr. Watson's attitude to Dickens is thoroughly balanced, and one is glad to note the absence of any of those silly suggestions that were rife a year or two ago to the effect that Dickens was a plagiarist of or in any sense a debtor to Surtees. Both writers retain the respective places that they held years ago, but Mr. Watson has no thought of challenging either

* "Robert Smith Surtees. A Critical Study," by Frederick Watson. London: George G. Harrap and Co., Ltd. 12s. 6d. net.

the fact of Dickens's immensely higher place or his right to it. Indeed, in point of fact, he gives the reason for it. One wants to be as just to Surtees as Mr. Watson is to Dickens, but this will be admitted: that whilst Surtees survives and will survive, he is known to only a limited circle. To the man in the street, Jorrocks is a vague comic character in some book or books written many years ago, while to the child of twelve Pickwick is a vital reality. Pigg is quite unknown to ninety per cent. of the users of our public libraries; with Sam Weller ninety-five per cent. of them are intimately acquainted. The average person could not name five characters in Surtees; he could name fifty Dickens characters and quote them as well. All this is certainly true. Of course, Surtees owes his persistence to some extent to the fact that he wrote about a sport that never changes, but others have written about hunting and are forgotten, and the real reason for his survival is, as already stated, that he was a creator of character whose principal medium was humour. But the same is true of Dickens: what is the explanation of his triumph? The answer is contained in a sentence in Mr. Watson's last chapter:—"But, in contradiction of the popular view that humour, to be supreme, must include pathos, the comedy of Surtees is innocent of sentiment." Exactly. Surtees's humour is *not* supreme; Dickens's is, and it is supreme just because it does contain sentiment.

The humorist whose humour lacks sentiment is a satirist, and while satire has its place in art, and the satirist serves a certain purpose, he who laughs *at* may never hope to win the affection of his fellows. "He hit one nail on the head," says Mr. Watson, "and that nail was satirical comedy. It is an attitude of art more unpopular than any other, because it is cold, uncomfortable, and narrow." Mr. Watson quotes Surtees himself:—"Most men take a pleasure in satire when it is not aimed at themselves." That may be true, as the author says it is, but the man who works from that angle is a cynic and consequently all he does lacks essential humanity. It is exactly the point of view that Dickens never took. Though many things may be said in criticism of Dickens and his work, the charge of cynicism can never be laid against him. That is the secret of his triumph. His point of view was exactly the reverse of Surtees's. There is not a character in his densely populated world at whom we laugh, save the very villains. That is the answer to those –there have been many of late— who attempt comparisons between these two writers. In outlook on life, in their opinions of their fellow men, in their attitudes towards all essentials, they are well nigh poles apart.

When all this has been said, there remains something else to be said, and that is that Mr. Watson has written an extremely able book on an interesting if not greatly inspiring subject. He knows his Surtees, the man and his work, intimately; he knows all about hunting, and he has a sound sense of literary values. He has done a work that was worth doing, and done it with complete success.

J. W. T. L.

THE INFLUENCE OF DICKENS

COMPILED FROM RECENT BOOKS

By LOUIS B. FREWER, M.A.
(Bodleian Library)

DICKENS AND DEBTS

"A point to be constantly borne in mind is, that in budget-making the debt service must come first; the interest on the public debt must be provided before any other appropriation is made, and provision for the amortization of that debt should follow. We have too many legislators at Washington and at the State capitals who emulate Wilkins Micawber . . . and say aloud: 'Thank God, that debt is paid' when they give one for another. A much wiser remark of this amusing creation by Dickens is found in these words, 'Annual income twenty pounds. . . .'"—"Colossal Debts and Heavy Taxes," by N. M. Butler. (Carnegie Endowment).

* * * * *

PEPYS

"Painful, indeed, to any right-minded reader must be the calamity which Pepys's detected act of conjugal unfaithfulness brings upon himself and his household. Those who have followed its protracted agony . . . may borrow, though with much deeper feelings, the famous words of the father of a later namesake: 'Oh, Sammy, Sammy, vy worn't there an alleybi!'"—"Samuel Pepys," article in the "Times Literary Supplement."

* * * * *

ELOCUTION

"WH. This is really composed of two sounds, H and W, sounded the reverse way to its written description. If you make a slow production of it you can perceive clearly that the aspirate precedes the W sound. There is a tendency to-day to discard this combination entirely and to use merely the sound for W whenever WH is written. Yet the omission of the aspirated fraction used to be considered a mark of vulgarity. When Dickens wished to indicate the coarse, brutal speech of Bill Sykes he denoted it thus:

'Wot's it all about, Fagin?' 'Wot are you stopping outside for?'

"Inflections; when a sneer is intended; something more than irony: 'And *you* was a-goin' to take me under you! *You* was, was you? Oh, how *kind!*' (Betsy Prig). 'You're quite a *powerful* speaker, sir . . . I wonder you don't go into *Parliament!*' (Scrooge).

"When Mr. and Mrs. Bumble keep the appointment with the villain Monks, he remarks to her:

'So! he's your husband, eh?'

'He my husband!' tittered the matron, parrying the question.

You will observe that the formidable Mrs. Bumble's utterance of 'he' could be rendered with several varieties of tone, none at all complimentary to Mr. Bumble.

"Another dramatic example of reiterated emphasis occurs in *Oliver*

Twist. . . . Fagin is making the spy, Noah Claypole, repeat in the presence of Sikes what Nancy has been overheard to say :

'Where she met two people ?'

'So she did.'

'A gentleman and a lady that she had gone to of her own accord before, who asked her to give up all her pals, and Monks first, which she did—and to describe him, which she did—and to tell her what house it was that we meet at, and go to, which she did—and where it could be best watched from, which she did—and what time the people went there, which she did—she did all this. She told it every word without a threat, without a murmur—she did—did she not ?' cried Fagin, half mad with fury." "Twenty-four Lessons in Elocution," by J. Bernard. (Pitman).

* * * * *

GIRL CHARACTERS

"Both Dickens and Thackeray had small daughters of their own, though neither novelist seems to have taken one of his children as a sitter for a portrait of a little girl. Little Nell . . . whose untimely death dissolved stern men into helpless tears, is said to have been drawn from Dickens's youthful sister-in-law, Mary Hogarth. It is not easy for us to-day to understand the enthusiasm aroused by the colourless picture of perfection : but there is excellent material in the schoolmistress, Miss Monflathers, for whose edification Mrs. Jarley changed the waxwork of Grimaldi the clown into 'Mr. Lindley Murray as he appeared when engaged in the composition of his English Grammar.'

"The little daughters of Mr. Dickens and Mr. Thackeray were acquainted with each other and Lady Ritchie, *nee* Anne Thackeray, has recorded how on one occasion she and her sister went to a children's party at Dickens's house. . . ."—"The Girl through the Ages," by D. M. Stuart. (Harrap).

* * * * *

ADAH MENKEN

". . . a number of well-known people did go there [Astley's]. . . . Among them was Charles Dickens. He had once, years earlier, seen 'Mazeppa' . . . and he thought he would like to renew his acquaintance with the drama. . . . On hearing of his unsuccessful attempt to see her, Adah Menken wrote to Dickens, offering to put a box at his disposal for any other night. The offer was accepted ; and, after the performance, Dickens had a chat with her in her dressing-room. They also met on other occasions. . . .

"Among her regular visitors at the Westminster Hotel in London . . . were the most distinguished literary men, such as Charles Dickens, Charles Reade, Watts Phillips . . ."

"But Swinburne's expert advice 'not to bother herself about poetry' was unpalatable. She did bother herself. She also bothered other people. Among them was Dickens, to whom she wrote, asking him to accept the dedication of a volume of verses that she was resolved to publish, and, if necessary, at her own cost.

"Either this letter, or the photograph of herself, which, together with some samples of her Muse, she enclosed, appealed to the novelist, for he answered by return :

Dear Miss Menken,

I shall have great pleasure in accepting your dedication, and I thank you for your portrait as a highly remarkable specimen of photography.

I also thank you for the verses enclosed in your note. Many such enclosures come to me, but few so pathetically written, and fewer still so modestly sent.

Faithfully yours,

Charles Dickens.

" The title chosen for the projected volume was ' Infelicia ' . . . but . . . ' Infelicia ' did not appear."—*" Victorian Sensations," by H. Wyndham. (Jarrolds).

* * * * *

In " Immortals at first hand, seen by their contemporaries," by Cecil Harmsworth (publ. Harmsworth), there are biographical extracts from John Forster, Thomas Carlyle, J. L. Motley, W. P. Frith and Sergeant Ballantine.

* * * * *

LITTLE NELL'S WANDERINGS

" In the miscellaneous collection of Edward FitzGerald's MSS, etc., in Trinity College Library, there is a little ordinary exercise book, with a stiff cover, which bears the title :

' LITTLE NELL'S WANDERINGS.'

FitzGerald was thirty-seven when he made (from Dickens's *Old Curiosity Shop*) this transcription of the Story of a Child (Little Nell) and an Old Man (her grandfather). ' Such a tale of their wanderings that few could read it without being moved to tears.'

The transcription, covering seventy-seven pages, was dictated by E. FG., who added corrections. The story is written in simple language, and the interest never flags.

He knew Dickens personally, and greatly admired his works. We find, in a letter to Anna Biddell :

' Have read *Bleak House* with praise to God for Dickens, with all his Faults—only Weeds amid the luxuriant overgrowth of his genius . . .'

And again, to Fanny Kemble. [1874].

' But I must look on Dickens as a mighty Benefactor to Mankind. . . .'

To Bernard Barton. Geldestone Hall, 22 August, 1844.

' Here I see my old friend Mrs. Schutz, and play with the children. Having shown the little girl the prints of Boz's Curiosity Shop, I have made a short extract of Little Nell's Wanderings, which interests her much, leaving out the Swivellers, etc. For children do not understand how merriment should intrude in a serious matter.

This might make a nice child's book, cutting out Boz's sham pathos, as well as the real fun ; and it forms a kind of Nelly-ad, or Homeric narration of the child's wandering fortunes, till she reaches at last a haven more desirable than any in stony Ithaca.'

FitzGerald's fascinating transcription . . . is now printed for the first time."—" A FitzGerald Medley," ed. by C. Ganz. (Methuen).

* The writer of this is not correct. "Infelicia" was published, and the volume was dedicated to Dickens and contained a facsimile reproduction of Dickens's letter to the authoress.—THE EDITOR.

Drawn by] [*Ruth Whittaker*

A PLEA FOR DISCRIMINATION

Sir,—The very sane and serviceable article by my friend, J. W. T. Ley, on "A Believer's Heresies," is marred by one parenthetical sentence—not because it happens to refer to myself, but because it contains just that sort of declaration that is the very curse of Dickensian enthusiasm. "Nothing," says Mr. Ley, "would induce me to criticise the *Carol*." Nothing! Then if Dickens had happened to insert a bit of nonsense or a piece of pure gibberish, Mr. Ley would accept it in reverent silence merely because it was in the *Carol*. Could blind fanaticism further go? And this is in an article which is devoted to plain speaking and independent judgment.

Nothing is more detrimental to an author and his fame than extravagant and unreasoning worship. Someone once called George Eliot the "female Shakespeare," and she has suffered for it ever since. I once prepared a paper on "A Midsummer Night's Dream," in which I poked a little fun at the absurdities and the doggerel in the quarrel scene between Hermia and Helena (Act III, Sc. 2)—quite a commonplace with all Shakespearean critics; and the Chairman said he would refuse to listen to "such sacrilege," and who forsooth was I to "attack the divine bard?"

It is against all such excesses I protest. No one loves and admires Dickens more than I. He has been a lifetime's devotion. Not a year passes but I go through practically the whole of his works, never tiring of them, always exhilarated by them, amused, delighted. But is this any reason why I should refuse to exercise my judgment concerning them in part or whole? Am I to say, because I love Dickens, that his mawkish love-scenes in *Oliver Twist* and *Nicholas Nickleby* are perfect?—that his short Detective Stories about paltry crimes and fifth-rate inspectors are masterpieces?—that *Barnaby Rudge* is on a level with *Bleak House*?—and that the youthful dramas and burlettas are gems of purest ray serene? This is what extravagance without reason leads us to.

I wonder if the out-and-out eulogists imagine they are really honouring Dickens by saying that he is above criticism; that he was without fault or blemish; that he wrote "all one ever the same." Of course, I have heard this sort of thing from those recondite pundits who go into raptures at Mr. Pickwick on the ice and have read little else. But we don't expect it from men like Mr. Ley, one whom I regard as among the best-informed in our midst. All the more do I deplore it, therefore, when he suddenly exclaims, in effect, "Here I close my eyes." It is a vicious example. All those estimable people we meet at social gatherings who think that Dickens did nothing better than the Fat Boy will jump at the excuse to close their eyes also, and keep them closed; and they will never see the real greatness and worth of the hero they pretend to worship.

Dickens, like the rest of us, was human. He had his weak moments and relapses. He had his limitations. He could be over-sentimental and namby-pamby—Rose Maylie makes me shudder, and sometimes I should even like to shake Dame Durden. Some of his villains are unnatural, and preposterously melodramatic. Who cares a rap about Monks or Rudge ? Some of his heroes are only fit for wax models in a tailor's shop. But what magnificent compensations we have ! What sublime heights are achieved ! And how large is the proportion of good things to the bad ! It is in finding out the best of Dickens and acclaiming it that we do him honour, and I earnestly plead with my fellow Dickensians for discrimination.

An eminent judge once said : " I have broken all the commandments except idolatry." It was a very wise exception. As a sinner I fear I must confess to having violated most of the Mosaic code. But I refuse to be idolatrous, and I will not immolate myself on the altar of genius. My preference is wise and loving appreciation of all that is best, and not an abject and slavish acceptance of what is worst.

" Nothing "—fatal word !—may induce my friend Ley to criticise the *Carol*. Very well. There is no need to argue with him. But for heaven's sake let " something " induce us all to be honest, open-minded, sensible, judicious ; and we shall love Dickens none the less by understanding him the more. J. Cuming Walters.

Manchester.

DROODANA

Sir,—I have read the letter of Mr. Whitcomb with interest, but remain unconverted. If I erred in troubling to study the everyday doings of Cloisterham, far back in the mists of history, and you, Mr. Editor, still more so, in imagining that Dickensians might like to peep through the screen, we erred in good company, for did not Dickens take Wilkie Collins to task for leaving nothing to the imagination of his readers ?

The world travels so fast nowadays, that the England of the " Hungry Forties " is almost as remote from us, as the old world of Richard the Lion-Hearted and " Bozzy Joscelyn " was from the same " Forties " when Carlyle gave us the Diary of these still older days.

No man knew better than Dickens how to make use of the everyday events of any period to give vraisemblance to his tale. Only two days before he was struck down, he visited Rochester, Langton tells us, apparently bent on securing local colour and the very atmosphere breathed by the perpetual Mayor of Cloisterham, Mr. Sapsea.

Like the character of his own creation, Mr. Grewgious, Dickens believed in keeping " an eye on every direction that may present itself." To secure lunar accuracy, Proctor accuses him of using a calendar (as did R. L. Stevenson), and the author of " The Moon " ought to know. It is evident from *Drood* itself that somehow Dickens made himself fully conversant with the railway developments of Kent in the years 1842-43.

Granted that the excerpts from old local papers are but the dry bones of the history of our fathers and grandfathers. Nevertheless, the literary map of England has still more than one area marked " Terra Incognita," and none such is more interesting to some of us than the corner of it called after *Edwin Drood*, in the larger " Dickens Land," to the exploration of which *The Dickensian* is entirely and worthily devoted. To whose exploration, too, we believe, Mr. Whitcomb himself has contributed not a little. John Y. Watt.

A VETERAN DROODIST RETURNS

SIR,—Although my research of thirty years ago was largely associated with the re-awakening of the "Drood" controversy, and although I have in my time devoted much leisure and enthusiasm in pursuing the elusive mystery, I confess to being a little weary of attempts which seek to attribute to Dickens an almost superhuman subtlety in planning his last work; and still more do I shun the conjectures—apparently so fashionable just now—as to the antecedents of certain characters, seeing that these suppositions derive little or no justification from the book itself, or from known facts concerning it.

I am quite incurious as to whether the Opium Woman was, or was not, Jasper's nurse, or whether a hypothetical partner in the Drood firm was to be imported into the solution, but I feel impelled to challenge Mr. Rust's comparison of Datchery and Inspector Bucket in relation to the canons of construction.

From the article entitled "The Mystery of Edwin Drood" in your Spring Number, I cull the following paragraph:—

> "We are assured, however, that Dickens could not have introduced a new character so late in a book. It is contrary to good construction of a novel. I doubt whether Dickens was aware of this canon of construction; but I am sure that he would have broken it. He had already done so when he brought the 'Younger Brother' into *The Old Curiosity Shop*, and Inspector Bucket into *Bleak House*."

If Mr. Rust assumes that a canon of construction forbids the introduction of any character whatsoever into the later part of a story, then I agree with him that Dickens may have been unaware of it, or prepared to break it, and I should think that innumerable authors—before and since—have been equally ignorant or rebellious; but I do not believe your contributor meant this. He is referring to the appearance on the scene of Datchery, a hitherto unacknowledged character, enshrouded in mystery, and certainly disguised, if Dickens methods are to be relied on. Here we have a case where the reader is, in a way, challenged to detect the identity of the character, but the case of Inspector Bucket is totally different: there is no mystery; Bucket is Bucket, and nobody else.

If Datchery is assumed to be a totally new character, all the air of mystery surrounding him, all the elaborate hints at disguise, vanish into thin air, and we have to conclude that Dickens was not only a bad craftsman, but a not too scrupulous one into the bargain.

I have long held that Dickens needs no defence in the matter of construction where his later works are concerned, and if we seek for a masterly example of the art of keeping an essential secret while introducing clues even in the opening lines of the book, we assuredly find this in *Great Expectations*; while in *Bleak House* we have Esther Summerson's parentage foreshadowed from the first, by subtle references to an almost eerie character who never appears before the reader until he lies stark on his last bed.

So I believe that the mature Dickens was neither unaware of the canon of construction noted by Mr. Rust, nor likely to break it.

GEORGE F. GADD.

REPLY TO A RAILWAY QUERY

SIR,—In reply to Mr. Montague Hardey's "Railway Note" on page 156 of the last *Dickensian*, in "Notes and Queries" of August 15th, 1931,

the following reply to an enquiry was given :—" At the time when Dickens wrote *Our Mutual Friend* (1865) the railway signals were as stated in the book, viz. Red for all clear ; green for danger. They were subsequently altered to red for danger, green for caution and white for all clear." As this statement has not been questioned I take it that it is correct and so settles the matter. T. W. Tyrrell.

"THE REAL" *DAVID COPPERFIELD*

Sir.—The indignation which the attempt of Mr. Robert Graves to "improve" Dickens has aroused in all English speaking countries is fully shared by the French reading public. In this connection I venture to send you the following translation of an article published yesterday in the "Gazette de Lausanne," one of Switzerland's leading newspapers. It may certainly be considered to express the feelings of readers of all classes and of every degree of culture in this part of the world :—

"The Man who has Undertaken to Rewrite Dickens.

"An English poet, Mr. Robert Graves, has conceived the extraordinary, the ridiculous idea of rewriting Dickens ! He has begun with *David Copperfield*, which he considers too long, too wordy, and which he has recreated under the title of 'The Real David Copperfield,' no less ! Here is an example of Mr. Graves's improving treatment. Describing the scene wherein David finds the drowned body of Steerforth, Dickens has written : 'On that part of the shore where Emily and I had looked for shells, two children—on that part of it where some lighter fragments of the old boat, blown down last night, had been scattered by the wind—among the ruins of the home he had wronged, I saw him lying with his head upon his arm, as I had often seen him lie at school.' In 'The Real David Copperfield,' those moving lines have become : 'I went. It was Steerforth He was. lying with his head upon his arm, as I had seen him last.'"

In order to justify this sort of "condensing," Mr. Robert Graves declares that of the five hundred thousand words contained in *David Copperfield*, two hundred and fifty thousand are superfluous ! I feel certain my readers will agree that such consummate impudence deserves a condign chastisement.

Lausanne, April 10th, 1933. A de Suzannet.

HYDE PARK, MR. LEY AND GISSING

Sir,—Chaucer, purporting to quote Seneca, says, "where great fyr hath long tyme endured ther dwelleth som vapour of warmness." Mr. Ley's remark, which must have mystified all but two readers, that I have, *of course*, adopted the usual Hyde Park methods, is aftermath of a long epistolary debate on my book "Dickens and Religion." It was hastily terminated because he doubted my sincerity, a worse specimen of what he calls Hyde Park methods than anything I am accused of. He has obviously been watching for me to trail my coat and now gleefully jumps upon it.

The point at issue was not Gissing's attitude to Dickens. I simply used Gissing's excellent summary of the closing chapter to show that Chuzzlewit was not an exception to the usual optimistic ending. As Mr. Cuming Walters has not referred to this point, no doubt it was a

mere inadvertence on his part. Mr. Ley has no ground for supposing I was endeavouring to mislead your readers as to Gissing's views.

Whilst, however, I am not bound to defend a position I did not assume, I may point out that in the same paragraph Gissing wrote: "Misled by the footlights he aims at a series of effects every one void of human interest, or at best an outrage to probability. He cuts through knots, throws difficulties into oblivion, and plays up his characters to a final rally; so sure of his touch upon the reader's emotions that he can disregard their bewilderment." Surely this is justification for regarding Gissing's remarks about "the brilliant triumph of stage tradition" as kindly chastisement. The effect of Gissing's generalisation about Dickens's endings is largely nullified by his attitude to particular books, *e.g. Oliver Twist* and *David Copperfield*. Of characters far more important than Mell he wrote, "Who can put faith in Mr. Peggotty, when he sets forth to search for his niece over the highways and byways of Europe? Who can for a moment put faith in Emily herself after she has ceased to be the betrothed of Ham?" This anticipates Mr. Robert Graves.

If Gissing so admired the endings why did he not imitate them? Mr. Ley will hardly dare say he was incapable. Only a genius could write the novels, but any hack could do the marrying, christening and burying in Dickens's last chapters. Far from that, Gissing vexed his publishers by the reverse. In "A Life's Morning" the heroine was left alive and married, only to please James Payn, reader to Smith & Elder, who insisted on a happy ending. She actually complains of cardiac trouble. Gissing removed the corpse, but forgot to eliminate the symptom.

Mr. Ley's concluding quotation—marked in my copy of Gissing—is irrelevant. I was no more called upon to go into Gissing's general attitude than was Mr. Ley to mention that he preferred Thackeray.

Mr. Ley's heart and art idea will not stand much examination. He would get nothing printed if he had one without the other. If we are to praise as human beings what we regret as critics, we may as well ask for fairy tales. Mr. Ley does not mind "A Believer's Heresies" so long as they are his. If they are not he is apt—to quote himself—"to show every sign of that impotence which an irritable person sometimes feels when he can't persuade an acquaintance to see a thing exactly from his point of view." I enjoyed Mr. Ley's article and share some of his heresies, though this may not please him. I have offered to debate with him and I do not mind if the venue is Hyde Park or his village green. I cannot do more.

W. Kent.

DUKE AND AN OLD ERROR

Sir,—The error of attributing to Dickens the authorship of writings in *All the Year Round* which were not his—and which still persists, despite the more complete opportunities now available for identification—received the widespread publicity of a broadcast on April 24, last, when the Duke of Beaufort, who is Lord Lieutenant of Gloucestershire and Lord High Steward of the city of Gloucester, inaugurated the week's special Gloucestershire broadcasts. Referring to the city of Gloucester, the Duke said:

"Charles Dickens wrote: 'Gloucester is a wonderful and misleading city. Apparently a combination of an ordinary capital and

cathedral town, till you happen to see a man in complete maritime costume. You follow him and find the Docks '."

As a matter of fact, the Duke was quoting—in very summarised form—from an article in *All the Year Round* of November 12th, 1859, headed " Our Eye-Witness at Gloucester," and, for the benefit of posterity, I had long since written in my copy of that publication the name of Charles Alston Collins, brother of Wilkie Collins, as the author.

The identity of the writer of the article was revealed to me many years ago by a very old citizen, who, like his father, was keenly interested in Dickensian matters and was able to give personal recollections of the occasion which brought Charles Collins to Gloucester in 1859.

E. Kendall Pearson.

TOM PINCH'S INN AT SALISBURY

Sir,—In the Spring Number of *The Dickensian*, among the illustrations on a page described as " Scenes from *Martin Chuzzlewit*," there is given a view of the " George," Salisbury. I presume the implication is that the " George " was the inn where Tom Pinch went to meet Martin (Chapter 5). I think Dickens commentators have erred in accepting Snowden Ward's identification on this point (page 114, " Dickensian Inns and Taverns," by B. W. Matz). More probably Dickens had in mind an inn situated at the time he wrote in the Market Place of Salisbury and named the " Ox," because when Tom Pinch finally left Pecksniff's house, he slept at the same inn (Chapter 31) in " a low four-poster shelving downward in the centre like a trough." In his bedroom " a graphic representation in oil of a remarkably fat Ox hung over the fireplace, and the portrait of some former landlord (who might have been the Ox's brother, he was so like him) stared roundly in, at the foot of the bed."

The " George " was not an inn, being without a licence at the date Dickens wrote his Salisbury chapters, and it was (and is) situated in the quiet High Street which leads to the Cathedral Close, and quite away from the bustling market place of the city, where Dickens certainly pictured his inn ; for he refers to the busy market scenes and the farmers and their customers " standing about in groups, or talking noisily together on the tavern steps." And Tom Pinch " walked into the market while they were getting breakfast ready for him at the inn."

Dickens's vivid picture of Salisbury market day which follows must have been drawn from actual observation, for even to-day there are points of resemblance. We may be sure that Dickens watched the scene from the window of an inn, let us say the " Ox," where he could partake of " a well-cooked steak and smoking hot potatoes . . . and a jug of most stupendous Wiltshire beer." I fancy he stopped at Salisbury on the way back from the famous trip to Cornwall, in the company of Maclise, Clarkson Stanfield, and Forster, during the late autumn of 1842, for it was at this date he decided upon the plan for *Martin Chuzzlewit*. Originally Dickens intended to locate Pecksniff in Cornwall.

The " Ox " inn was situated in Ox Row, facing the Market Place of Salisbury. It existed until 1924, when the licence was terminated on the plea of redundancy.

S. M. Ellis.

" Dickensiana of the Quarter " is unfortunately crowded out. It will appear in the next issue.

FELLOWSHIP NOTES

CONTRIBUTED BY BRANCHES

Drawn by *Ruth Whittaker*

SPECIAL NOTICE.—Owing to the Editor's holidays contributions for the Autumn Number must be received not later than July 20th.

An overseas branch secretary writes :—

"I am enclosing a short report of the activities of our branch for the magazine; some of our members have complained to me that there has not been any account of our doings for some time in the magazine, but as we have not had any special feature to report I have not troubled you."

This is the right spirit, and I hope that readers who do not see any report from their branch in this number will neither blame their Hon. Secretary nor me. So far as I am concerned, all reports received within the advertised time appear in the next number of *The Dickensian*. If your branch is not reported, it is no doubt because your secretary has not considered your meetings have contained any notable feature worth reporting, and a mere statement of a lecture having been given on a certain date is not matter of sufficient interest to be recorded here. —THE EDITOR.

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DEATH OF SIR JAMES BRUTON

By the death of Sir James Bruton, of Gloucester, a vacancy has been created in the list of the Vice-Presidents of the Fellowship. Sir James, who was 85, had been an ardent and well-informed Dickensian from his early years. A brother of the late Mr. H. W. Bruton, the well-known bibliophile and collector of Dickens first editions, Sir James had been a valued member of the Gloucester Branch since its inauguration in 1906, and had twice been President. Sir James Bruton was one of Gloucester's most prominent public men. He had been Mayor nine times (for seven years in succession); he was Coalition Member of Parliament for the city during the war; and he had filled a host of other public positions, including those of City High Sheriff, City Magistrate, and Chairman of the Sharpness New Docks and Gloucester and Birmingham Navigation Company. He was also Provincial Grand Master of Gloucestershire Freemasons. Amid all these activities, Sir James Bruton's interest in Dickensian matters remained undiminished.

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HEADQUARTERS' INFORMAL DINNER

An informal dinner was held in London on April 1st at the Palace Hotel, Bloomsbury. Ninety-five guests sat down to an excellent

repast under the chairmanship of Mr. J. H. McNulty, who, in a glowing speech, proposed "The Immortal Memory." The varied programme of music, songs and recitals given by our own members revealed much latent talent and gave the utmost pleasure to the company. Mr. W. B. Warren, in proposing the health of the Chairman, paid high tribute to his brilliant qualities as a speaker, and altogether the evening proved one of the most successful functions of its kind we have held.

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GOOD WORK BY THE OLDEST U.S.A. BRANCH

The Chester Branch has this year had the pleasure of defraying the cost of placing *Great Expectations* into Braille type for the blind. One of our members, Mercy P. Lloyd, who does a great deal of Braille work for the Red Cross, transcribed the master copy herself, and from this we have had a library copy made. To our knowledge the Chester Branch is the first in the United States to put one of Dickens's works into Braille, which we feel is quite fitting for the oldest branch in the United States.

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PITTSBURGH DOINGS

The season has been a very happy one for the Pittsburgh Branch, and although *Martin Chuzzlewit* has not been as much of a favourite with the members as some of Dickens's other works, the Study Class has had very interesting, instructive evenings and the attendance has been large in spite of some exceedingly disagreeable weather. At the October meeting a splendid résumé of the book was given in preparation for the other programmes. Talks were given on "The Courtship of Ruth and John Westlock," one on that of Mark and Mrs. Lupin, and one on "The Courtship of Martin and Mary." On November 28th the "Two Great Swindles" were discussed, and on January 16th two talks were given, one taking up the unselfish characters in the book and the other the selfish ones. The February meeting was a general review of *Martin Chuzzlewit*, all the members taking part in a very informal way, which we found to be very delightful and most instructive.

At a meeting in October, Dr. N. Andrew Cleven gave a fine paper on "Dickens and the Common Man." At the December dinner meeting a dramatic adaptation of "Christmas at Dingley Dell" was given, the costuming being particularly good, and the characters very cleverly impersonated. The Birthday Dinner was a great success, the members and friends attending in costumes representing Dickens characters. The tables were labelled as Dickens books, and as the guests arrived they were seated according to the book in which he or she appeared, and after dinner a very jolly hour was passed acting out and guessing the various characters. We are looking forward to the play in March, "Sketches from *Martin Chuzzlewit*," the proceeds from which will go to swell our "Tiny Tim Fund."

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THE BIRTHDAY IN NEW YORK

Mrs. Georgie E. B. V. Wood was selected this year to speak to the Immortal Memory at the Birthday Dinner in New York. Mrs. Wood said that if Dickens were now living, what he would prize above everything else would be to have his readers say that they love him; that outside of his works it is the man himself that we love. Her remarks

were distinguished by her usual felicitous language and grace of delivery. Rev. Norman Vincent Peale, Pastor of the Marble Collegiate Church, on Fifth Avenue, gave an address on "Charles Dickens, the Artist in Human Nature." He said that Dickens was a singer of the simple things, who knew the music of the human heart; that in him we perceive the touch of God; that he is somewhat akin to Lincoln, for the hand of genius was upon them both. He spoke of Sinclair Lewis's recent novel, "Ann Vickars," stating that he cannot escape from the overwhelming blight of cynicism; that we need a man like Dickens to portray the greatness and the grandeur of the human soul, as Millais did in his paintings. His address was an eloquent tribute to the genius of Dickens. Hon. Bainbridge Colby, former Secretary of State under President Wilson, was the final speaker, his subject being "Had we a Dickens To-day." Touching upon the criticisms that had been made of his writings, he said his commanding genius silences carpers. He wondered what he would have to say of Huey Long and the recent filibuster in the United States Senate, or of Congress that twiddles its thumbs from December to March and assures the world that it is impossible to do anything. He spoke of the Circumlocution Office in *Little Dorrit*, and stated that the situation in Washington was a true Dickensian situation. He gave a fine, thoughtful address, and his fluent language and pleasing personality added greatly to its enjoyment. Mr. Reed read a number of telegrams received from various Dickens Fellowship branches. Thus was brought to a happy close another of those delightful functions that have been as milestones in the history of the New York Branch of the Dickens Fellowship.

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There was an evening of music at the March meeting of the New York Branch, when Mr. Reed, the President, was in the chair. In his opening remarks he drew attention to the fine collection of musical selections, etc., from *Martin Chuzzlewit* in the showcase, and during the evening Mr. Arthur Bailey sang most delightfully a group of songs accompanied on the piano by Miss Lois Witesell (some from Dickens). Mrs. Lyman Whitney Allen gave a most interesting talk on "Dickens and Music." She stated that Dickens had met Meyerbeer and Jenny Lind; that he was fond of singing a song, was very sensitive to sound, and any discord annoyed him intensely. Dickens knew and mentioned by name thirty-three different musical instruments, and played on some of them; he had a musical ear, and some entire pages of his writings might be written in blank verse. In conclusion, she said that there are more sermons in Dickens's books than a preacher could preach in a year. Mr. Thomas F. Mulholland then followed with a most fascinating talk on "The Irish and Dickens." He stated that there are only three Irish characters in his works, one in *Sketches by Boz* and two in *Martin Chuzzlewit*; that the Irish are the most laughter-loving and the jolliest people on the face of the earth, and that Dickens could have written a splendid novel about the Irish. His remarks were characterised by a keen insight into the Irish character, were well expressed, and were enriched with much native Irish humour. We all then, as a most natural and logical thing to do, wended our way to the rear of the gallery, where the usual delightful refreshments in the way of punch and most tasty little cookies satisfied our bodily needs, and greetings and convivial talk spiritually regaled us.

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DOMBEY AND SON AT ROCHESTER

After the brief business part of the March meeting of the Rochester Branch and a vote of sympathy passed to Mrs. Prall, President, absent through illness, the rest of the evening was devoted to a dramatic representation of *Dombey and Son*. The whole thing was altogether beyond expectation. It was a finely conceived version, the work of Mrs. N. Hewitt, assisted by Miss N. Cole. It is made up of 12 scenes and 17 performers—not one of the latter but merits appreciation for the histrionic ability displayed. The costumes also, many specially made for the occasion, were truthful to the period, and, as scene followed scene, the shiftings, etc., were quickly arranged. The meeting was held at the large hall of the Co-op. at Strood, and it was full of enthusiastic Dickensians, who greatly enjoyed the evening. Where all did so well and conscientiously played their parts, selection for special notice is not easy. The dramatic skill displayed by Mrs. Hewitt in her construction is indeed worthy of special mention. Mr. Ellison, in his dual parts of Brogley, the broker, and Major Bagstock, delighted everyone, and Mrs. Ellison made one of the best Mrs. MacStingers imaginable and convulsed her audience. Mr. E. R. Rigg entered with pathos into the very soul of Sol Gills. Mr. Cobbett Barker, in a like spirit, made a delightful and lovable Captain Cuttle. Enthusiastic calls brought them before the footlights, where a delighted audience expressed their applause. Mrs. Hewitt has presented the branch with the copyright of the play; we shall be happy to lend it to other branches for a fee of half-a-guinea per performance.

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VANCOUVER

The Vancouver Branch has ninety paid-up members. At every meeting 15 minutes have been devoted to some discussion of a character in *Martin Chuzzlewit*. Prominent University professors and others have addressed the Fellowship from time to time. The Birthday celebration in Hotel Georgia was a great success. His Honour Judge J. A. Forin was the principal speaker. Prior to this the branch gave a broadcast which was listened to by thousands of people, including such items as the famous speech of Buzfuz, "Dickens in Camp," "Miss Shepherd" from *David Copperfield*, and a scene from *Nicholas Nickleby* The duet, "What are the Wild Waves Saying," was also sung.

At Christmas time a card of greeting was sent to every branch throughout the world and scores of replies have been received.

Mrs. G. W. Edwards, one of our Past Presidents, and a former Secretary, expects to be able to attend the conference at Blackpool and represent Vancouver. She will be visiting her sister, Miss Peggy Webling, the novelist, an honorary member of the Branch.

The band of Dickens Players, under the direction of Mr. George Turrell, has presented many sketches and plays at the meetings, and have also visited a large number of places and given Dickens plays and entertainments.

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A BOSTON HOUSEWARMING

With the April meeting, the Boston Branch came back to its real home, the Dickens Room in the Parker House, the hotel where Dickens lived so happily in the winter of 1867-68. A goodly company assembled and listened enthusiastically to a most interesting programme arranged by Miss Mabel Ellery Adams, who gave a paper on her reactions to

Dickens entitled "A Dickens Background." Mrs. Victoria Cameron Jesseman read "In the Valley" from "No Thoroughfare," mentioned in Miss Adams's paper; Mrs. May Sleeper Ruggles sang, and Mr. Mervin E. Stevens read "Sam Weller's Walentine." Mr. Edwin D. Mead, our honoured member, who heard Dickens read eighteen times, said that he was delighted to be at the housewarming, that a hotel was the only proper meeting place for the Dickens Fellowship, especially the Parker House with its wealth of associations, and confessed that he hoped "after playing all the other parts in his variegated life, to end his days as a tavern-keeper!" If he acquires an inn, he may be sure the Boston Branch will descend upon it as a body and hold a Dickens Dinner or some other special jollification!

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THE NEED OF A DICKENS TO-DAY

Speaking at the Winnipeg Birthday Celebrations, Dr. David A. Stewart said that Dickens lived and wrote in an age strikingly similar to the present. It was an age of tribulation, an age of hunger marches, an age of want and poverty. The world to-day needs Dickens's laughter and his broad humanity. Both, he believed, would act as great antidotes for the poisons of the modern world.

"Our own sad world looks hard at its face in the glass and argues, and wonders and weeps," he said. "Would that it could laugh! Consider the narrow nationalism. Consider the spirit of plus fours. See the swagger city man tell the farmer how to pay his debts on 30 cent wheat. Think of how we save our country by piling up mortgages and commitments for our great grandchildren to pay, or default. Consider stocks watered to the thousandth dilution, radio crooners and their nasal supremacy. "Think of all these things, and many more," Dr. Stewart continued," and say if we do not need the kindly satirical spirit of a Dickens in the life of to-day."

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THE SEASON AT HULL

A very enjoyable season has drawn to a conclusion at the Hull Branch. The syllabus has been a high-class one, including lectures, play readings, and a debate on "Does Dickens maintain his Appeal?" which provoked a strenuous discussion. A fine lecture and discussion took place, when Mr. C. H. Burden, B.A., B.Sc., spoke on "Dickens and the Moderns." Miss Margaret Brash, the well-known authoress, gave us a wonderful talk on "My Work as a Novelist." Our Lonely Folk's Party at Christmas was attended by 125 gloriously happy people. Elections for next season: the new President is Mr. H. J. Barney. Miss Gertrude Watson, L.R.A.M., now adds to her old post of Pianist the office of Hon. Secretary.

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BRAVO! AUCKLAND

The success attained by the Auckland Branch last session was highly gratifying, the splendid attendances and enthusiasm shown making it one of the best years in our history. We carried through a full and varied programme, our activities continuing until the 9th December, when we gave an entertainment to the patients of the Mental Hospital. Our ambition in regard to the Charles Dickens Cot has been fully realised; the cot has been purchased, and sufficient money obtained to pay for, and endow, the cot for all time, and it is now placed in the Princess Mary Children's Ward of the Auckland Public Hospital.

BIRMINGHAM'S TINY TIMS

The Birmingham Branch has already raised £659 towards the £1,000 required for the endowment of a Dickens Cot in the Birmingham Children's Hospital. This excellent fund lately received substantial augmentation from Dickens lovers in many distant parts due to the appeal which the Chairman of the Fund, Mr. Arthur E. Bixby, broadcast a few weeks ago.

A Concert of Chamber Music, arranged by Mrs. Aubrey Wood, produced a substantial cheque of £24 for the same fund. The Hon. Secretary has distributed 280 garments, given by the members for the "Poor Joes" and "Maggies" of Birmingham.

During an entertaining paper given by Mr. John Billington on Railways "In Dickens's Days," it was discovered that our much beloved "nonogenarian" member, Mr. Edward Poulter, of Solihull, had seen Queen Adelaide arriving at Westminster in her Sedan Chair. The Birthday Supper and Poor Children's Birthday Party were very enjoyable, the success of the latter being largely due to the generosity of the large audience which attended the Recital of "The Carol" by Mr. Frank S. Johnson. The performance of *Dombey and Son*, as arranged by Mr. J. Cooper Sands to a highly delighted audience, brought the session to a satisfactory close.

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DICKENS IN THE PACIFIC PARADISE

The Honolulu banquet on the Birthday was a greater success than any of the four preceding, two hundred and thirty-two guests being present. Although Hawaii grows everything one can think of, it does not grow geraniums in quantity; and the spirit that animates the Fellowship was expressed by Mrs. Malcalm Macintyre and Mrs. George R. Ewart, who spent several days in gathering the flowers one by one. Mrs. Arthur G. Smith, our Honorary Secretary, painted by hand the geranium on each of the menus, and Hawaii is extremely proud of them. They gave tone and distinction to the banquet. Mrs. C. C. Hadley, President of the Dickens Fellowship of Los Angeles, brought greetings in a charming speech. The toast of the Immortal Memory was given by Dr. A. W. Slaten and was worthy of the speaker and the subject. The two scenes from *Martin Chuzzlewit* went off beautifully. All told, it was a highly successful evening, and made Dickens history in the Paradise of the Pacific.

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THE OPTIMISM OF DICKENS

This was the subject of a paper by Rev. J. Gleave to the Wellingborough Branch on March 4th. Mr. Gleave contrasted the writings of the modern young intelligentsia with their moral cynicism, spiritual defeatism and pathos of futility, with the clean happy hopeful view of life portrayed in Dickens's books. The optimism of Dickens, Mr. Gleave said, was the noble kind that looks life fairly and squarely in the face, that sees life steadily and sees it whole, that goes down into the depths of experience, and yet refuses to despair. His was an optimism not easily or cheaply won. He himself had an unco sharp taste of the ways of life. At the most impressionable age his little world of joys and hopes and dreams suddenly went to pieces, and he was plunged into tragedy. It would be difficult to exaggerate what the sensitive lad must have suffered. Continuing, Mr. Gleave said that Dickens was not blind to the fact that life can be sordid and evil

but his final word would be like that of Mark Tapley—jolly. Dickens teaches us to think of life as a splendid gesture, a great pageant, a joyous riot of emotions, surprises, witticisms and hearty hilarious fun, that it is good to laugh and good to weep, good to forget ourselves in the laughter and tears of others, good to be alive in the fullest sense of the word. If we lose our taste for Dickens we lose our taste for life.

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A SUCCESSFUL SESSION AT MANCHESTER.

The session, though marred by the sad loss of Mr. Parry, has been a very successful one. Meetings have been well attended, and an excellent standard has been maintained. There have been six literary evenings which have each been extremely interesting, and short papers by members have disclosed a keen interest in, and knowledge of, Dickens's works. The innovation of a short reading of the book of the session by certain members was very successful, and the social events of the Branch have been very greatly enjoyed by all members. The fourteenth annual dramatic performance, "The Nicklebys," resulted in over £47 being handed over to the Council for Cripples. Mrs. Wilson, the adaptor, and Mr. G. M. Farmer, her co-producer, are to be heartily congratulated on this success.

The night of March 17 was in the form of a Café Chantant, and members of the North Regional Group were present. A delightful supper was provided by the President and members of the Council, and an enjoyable entertainment followed. March 30 was devoted to short papers on *Martin Chuzzlewit*. Miss Biggs read a paper on "The Pleasant Characters." Miss Comey, on "The Detestable Characters," and Miss Farmer in a highly diverting paper, contrasted the times and conditions of Martin Chuzzlewit with those of to-day. Mr. H. E. Evans gave a provocative paper, asserting that the book was an unpleasant one, written at a time when Dickens was out of temper with health, publishers and America. Mr. J. R. Dean deputised for Mr. J. Cuming Walters, who had sent in a paper, but was unable to be present. Mr. Walters placed *Chuzzlewit* in the first five of Dickens's great works, and likened the story to a musical symphony with Tom Pinch as the lonely organist. Alderman Grindle, of Salford, who claims to be one of the few surviving men in the North who heard Dickens give one of his readings, was present at this meeting, and was heartily welcomed by the President. At the Annual Meeting, Mrs. H. E. Evans introduced the newly-elected President, Mr. Howson Ray, F.R.C.S. In thanking the members for their support and co-operation during a very successful session, Mrs. Evans appealed for the same support for her successor.

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THE SEASON AT PITTSBURGH

At the first Study Class a general review of *Martin Chuzzlewit* was given ; at the second meeting three talks were given on "The Courtships in *Martin Chuzzlewit*," and in November the subject was "The Two Great Swindles in *Martin Chuzzlewit*," treated in two splendid papers. In January two talks were given, one on "The Unselfish Characters," and the other on "The Selfish Characters," and in February there was a general discussion of the whole book, each member expressing some thought or opinion.

At the Dinner meeting in October a splendid lecture on "Dickens and the Common Man" was given by one of the members, while at the

December meeting an adaptation of "Christmas at Dingley Dell" was given. At the Birthday Dinner, the tables bore labels of Dickens's books, and the guests, who came in costumes representing Dickens's characters, were seated according to the book in which his or her character appeared, and later in the evening each member gave a quotation descriptive of the character. At the April meeting a paper was given on "The Vehicles of Dickens," which was most interesting and amusing.

The play this season was "Scenes from *Martin Chuzzlewit*," cleverly woven together to make a delightful three-act play. The proceeds will be used to swell the branch's Tiny Tim Cot Fund.

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THE "BEST YET" AT CIRENCESTER

The session just closed—undoubtedly the "best yet"—saw four of the six speakers drawn from its own ranks. Opening the session, the President, Mr. J. T. Henderson, gave a masterly analysis of *Martin Chuzzlewit*. Then the Rev. T. C. Simpson shattered some idols with "Some Misplaced Admirations," which, in abridged form, appeared in the last issue of *The Dickensian*, and in the same issue drew a protest from Mr. W. B. Warren, who, of course, could not be aware of the fact, any more than were the members of the Branch, that at the same time Mr. Simpson contemplated a future paper extolling the virtues of the very characters whose vices he then condemned. In December, Captain H. F. Roberts dealt lovingly with *A Christmas Carol*, and then, through illness, disappeared for the remainder of the session, though he promises to be as bright and breezy as ever next autumn. Then Mr. Harold Tempest, from an intimate acquaintance derived from his stage portrayals of Uriah Heep and James Carker, sketched with great skill "Some Dickens Rogues."

One of the two visitors was Mr. J. Cooper Sands, who chose a unique method of presenting Dickens in an admirable lecture-recital, "The Drama of Chesney Wold," which had separate historical and literary sides, and was finely illustrated with lantern slides. The second visitor was Mr. H. O. Barnett, president of Cheltenham Branch, whose delightful paper on "Drama in Dickens's Day," appropriately followed closely upon the successful public presentation of Mr. Barnett's adaptation of *Great Expectations*.

On the dramatic side the Branch has "come out strong." Character readings have revealed unexpected new talent. Scenes from *Martin Chuzzlewit* have been dramatised by members and given at the monthly meetings, a gem being "The Denunciation of Pecksniff," which followed the annual business meeting. But the great effort was *Great Expectations*, which at its two performances was seen by over a thousand people, and produced a substantial sum for the upkeep of the Dickens Fellowship Cot in the children's ward of Cirencester Memorial Hospital and other good works which the Branch supports. In Mr. W. C. T. Paternoster the Branch has a most patient and painstaking producer, and in Mr. A. B. Ferriman a property manager of great resource and ability—two reasons why the public is learning to look forward to local Dickens Fellowship productions. The success of *Great Expectations* was celebrated by a supper—a jolly affair which would have afforded no credit to Mark Tapley—when the air was thick with Dickensian quotations and allusions, and presentations were made with true Dickensian ceremony. Wisely, the Branch has decided to

carry on next session with the same President and the same Secretary, the latter being Mr. H. C. Leach, a live wire whose services must not be lost, and, as last summer, to stage a Dickens tableau in the local hospital carnival.

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A successful year has just closed in the Worcester (Mass.) Branch. Monthly meetings have been held at members' houses, and have been confined to *Martin Chuzzlewit*. During Christmas week a special meeting, when all attended in costume. The plans of this new branch are to continue with our present numbers until there is a decided change in the financial condition of the country. They will then probably establish a club room, and increase our membership. There has been an extraordinary revival of interest in Dickens's works due to the existence of the branch.

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Leyton reports a very successful session. Attendances have been good and interest well sustained. Dramatic sketches from Dickens have been prominent, and acceptable features and preparations are well in hand for the forthcoming season.

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The Committee's report at the annual meeting of the Southampton Branch in April disclosed a very successful session. Numbers had increased, and the accounts showed a favourable balance. The meetings have been well attended, and great interest taken in the study of *Martin Chuzzlewit*. This was chiefly due to the work of the sub-committee in arranging sketches to illustrate various scenes, and also the choice of suitable readings. The Birthday Celebration took the form of a Dickens Costume Party, and was a great success. Local charities, including the Rotary Fund for Christmas good cheer for the poor have been well supported, the money being obtained by whist drives. The President (Mr. Kenneth H. Vickers, M.A., Principal of University College), officers and committee have been re-elected.

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Eastbourne held a Victorian Tea Party on the birthday. This was followed by "A Penny Reading," arranged by Mrs. Ferguson. The President, Mr. F. J. Hansor, represented the Village Squire, and others taking part were "Garge" (Mrs. Ferguson), Schoolmistress (Mrs. Giles), Village Belle (Miss Bussey). The last meeting of the Study Circle took the form of an "At Home," and was made the occasion of a presentation by Mr. Goode (on behalf of the Branch) to Mrs. Greaves (who is not seeking re-election as Hon. Secretary) of a cut-glass salad bowl with servers, and a casserole in silver stand.

* * * * *

The Rugby Branch is now showing a year of sturdy growth and a happy tone characterised the annual meeting. The President, Mrs. Eardley Morris, presided over a record attendance, including a number of new members. The financial statement presented by Mr. A. White revealed a small balance in hand. The report of the Hon. Secretary showed that the past year had been a very active one, the outstanding events being the Dickens Birthday Costume Dance, a Dickens song recital by the President, a talk on "Dickens and Education" by Ald. R. H. Myers, and visits to the Dickens House and Redditch.

* * * * *

At the Birthday Celebration by the Melbourne Branch, Mr. Southwell,

Hon. Secretary, read a short paper on the celebration of Dickens's birthday. Miss E. A. Fraser read a paper, "Dickens on Birthdays," mainly selections from his letters. At the March meeting, Mr. Callaway, president, spoke feelingly of the valuable service rendered by the late Mrs. Malcolm. Mrs. Wasley, wife of Judge Wasley, gave a bright talk on "Old London," of which she showed an intimate knowledge. Her love for the wonderful and interesting old city was evident in all she said. Mr. J. P. Quayne spoke on the humour of rogues and villains, quoting many instances. He estimated Quilp to be the greatest villain in literature, placing second Count Fosco of Wilkie Collins' "The Woman in White."

* * * * *

In Blackburn, the Birthday was celebrated by a whist drive, in which nearly one hundred took part. The following month, in the regrettable absence of Mrs. Greenwood, of Blackpool, Mr. T. Holden gave readings of several of Dickens's little known short stories, which proved very acceptable. The Rev. Canon Boddington's lecture in March on "England from a Dickens Coach" presented a most interesting picture of the Dickens era, and was illustrated by readings from *Pickwick* and *Martin Chuzzlewit*. At the final meeting of the session there was a full and lively discussion on three papers from *Our Mutual Friend*, read by lady members.

NORTH-WESTERN REGIONAL GROUP

The Council of this group were the guests of the Blackburn Branch on March 25th. Under the chairmanship of Mr. Stanley Sutton, of Manchester, a full attendance of delegates from Blackpool, Blackburn, Liverpool and Manchester, fifteen in all, held a successful meeting. The Chairman reported the death of Mr. D. J. Parry, the first Secretary of the Group, and his memory was duly honoured. Mr. H. E. Evans was elected Hon. Secretary in succession to Mr. F. R. Dean, who had acted *pro tem.* The Council resolved that efforts should be made to form a branch at Preston, and there was a long discussion with regard to the position at Stockport.

After tea, provided by the Blackburn Branch, the members visited the Blackburn Art Gallery and inspected the interesting exhibits shewn by the Curator, Mr. Ashton.

THE LAST OF THE DICKENS CIRCLE

We regret to record the passing of the last of the brilliant Dickens Circle, Mr. Francesco Berger, at the age of ninety-nine. He was justly proud of his fifteen years' friendship with Dickens, during which time he composed the music for the plays "The Lighthouse" and "The Frozen Deep," by Wilkie Collins, which Dickens produced at Tavistock House. Only two years ago, Mr. Berger, who was a Vice-President of the Fellowship, contributed an article to *The Dickensian* on his memories of Dickens.

THE LATE PROFESSOR CRAWFORD

Prof. A. W. Crawford for twenty-one years in the chair of English literature in the University of Manitoba and the first President of the Winnipeg branch of the Fellowship, a position which he occupied for four years, died suddenly in Hamilton, Ont., in May. At the time of

his death, he was an active member of the Hamilton branch of the Fellowship. Dr. Crawford was well known in literary circles. He was the author of several books and had written many magazine articles.

THE BOAT-HOUSE AT GRAVESEND

The old boat-house near Gravesend, described in *The Dickensian* of 1929 (page 124), long ago condemned as unfit for habitation, has now been pulled down. It has been stated quite erroneously that this was the original of Peggotty's boat-house.

DICKENS SKETCHES IN LONDON

On the 26th April, at the Millicent Fawcett Hall, Westminster, the Dickens Fellowship presented, at the conclusion of the General Meeting, a series of sketches from Dickens under the personal direction of Miss Frances Jolly. It was not stated in the programme by whom the sketches were so cleverly fashioned into acting shape ; so this tribute of deserved praise must be addressed to anonymity. The sketches dealt variously with the Kenwigses and Mr. Lillyvick ; Todgers's and the frustrated wedding feast of Charity Pecksniff ; Mark Tapley and Mrs. Lupin at the " Blue Dragon " ; with an interlude, a gem of its kind, responsible for a considerable hilarity and applause, by Mr. and Mrs. Neville Jolly purporting to render in the guise of Mr. and Mrs. Lenville, " their admired musical act as performed before all the crowned heads of Europe." The staging and costuming were alike excellent throughout, the ladies' dresses being colourful and charming, and if I am not mistaken, largely the product of the players themselves, while the ensemble, particularly at the wedding reception, was a joy to watch. The company reproduced faithfully, except in one or two minor instances of undue exaggeration, the true Dickens quaintness and humour, and some of us recaptured the thrill of joy that we experienced at our first and early reading of Dickens. What the players lacked in technique was compensated for by their obvious enthusiasm. The individual performances of Miss Cooke as Henrietta Petowker, with recitation, " The Blood Drinker's Burial," delivered with melodramatic gusto with her back hair down ; Miss Frith as Morleena, in long trousers and pigtails, with dance ; Miss Hellier as Charity Pecksniff ; Mr. Read, both as Mr. Snevellicci (a capital performance) and as Mr. Jinkins ; Mr. Young as Mr. Moddle (though a shade too sepulchral) ; and Mrs. Bacon as both Mrs. Kenwigs and Mrs. Todgers, all deserve special mention. Miss Jolly, who contented herself with the small part of Mrs. Lupin, which I feel sure appealed to her enormously, is to be sincerely congratulated on what I venture to think the most successful of her lengthening list of similar productions. Her reward was to be found in the hearty laughter and enthusiastic applause that greeted each item in the generous programme, while the Fellowship is to be congratulated on having the willing services of so energetic and capable an organiser. A. E. B. C.

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The Dickens Fellowship Conference

At BLACKPOOL, JUNE 16th to 19th.

The following are the preliminary arrangements made for visitors.

FRIDAY June 16th .. Reception at the Imperial Hydro Hotel at 8 p.m. by the President and members of the Blackpool Branch. Light music, etc. Refreshments.

SATURDAY June 17th .. Morning: the Business Meeting. Photograph in Imperial Hydro grounds. Afternoon: Car ride to the Pleasure Beach. Afternoon tea as guests of the Blackpool Branch at the Casino, Pleasure Beach. Evening: Banquet at the Imperial Hydro Hotel, followed by a dance until midnight. Chairman, Ald. John Potter, J.P., M.P. Tickets 10/6 each.

SUNDAY June 18th .. Morning: Service at St. Paul's Church. Afternoon: Motor Coach Drive round the Fylde. This delightful trip covers twenty miles of the coastline, and the same distance of the rural Fylde. The cost, 2/6 per head. Evening: Free.

MONDAY June 19th .. MOTOR TOUR TO THE LAKE DISTRICT. Leave Blackpool about 8-30 to 9 a.m. Morecambe Bay, Kendal, Windermere, Ambleside, Grasmere, to Keswick (Lunch), Thirlmere, Bowness, Lyth Valley, Levens Bridge, Milnthorpe, to Lancaster. At Lancaster we shall inspect the King's Head and in the Museum a display of matters of interest to Dickensians is being arranged by Mr. Bland, the Borough Librarian. In the Banqueting Hall an official welcome will be extended by the Lady Mayoress, Councillor Annie E. Helme, after which Tea will then be served. The cost of the day, including Lunch and Tea, will be 12/6 per head.

EVENING .. At 8 p.m. the Mayor and Corporation of Blackpool will entertain the Delegates in the Baronial and Spanish Halls of the Winter Gardens to a Dance. A Running Buffet will be provided free. Dickensian Character Costume as far as possible, otherwise Evening Dress. The beauties of these Halls will greatly enhance the glory of the evening. At 12 midnight, our programme will be completed.

ALL MEMBERS OF THE FELLOWSHIP ARE WELCOME.

For further particulars, hotel accommodation, etc., write the Hon. Secretary, Mr. J. Sherratt, "Hild-Leen," Pierston Av., Blackpool, N.S.

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